

Dedication

To God Almighty, for his gift of life

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The peoples of Africa, both in the continent and the Diaspora for their resilience, despite over four hundred years of enslavement, exploitation and domination by the rest of the world.

Acknowledgements

This anthology is a product of many tireless days of conceptualisation, research, reviews, presentations, discussions, suggestions, revisions and editing. These and the logistics of coordination that lasted almost a year in no small measure ensured the commendable quality of this book. The book engages critically with topical and trending issues which elucidate the African culture, its exportation and its place in the world as well as its role in conjunction with tourism as veritable instruments for African development. There were over fifty well-researched contributions received from contributors from across Africa and the United States of America for this book, but these final selections capture the essence of the project. Hence, the editors want to sincerely thank these scholars who sent in contributions but whose contributions did not make it to the press; it is not a reflection of the quality of their contributions. And for those whose contributions made it and whose names appear atop the individual chapters and in the biography page, we sincerely appreciate them for their erudition, patience and commitment to the project despite so many challenges.

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**DYNAMICS OF
CULTURE AND TOURISM
IN AFRICA**

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**Perspectives on Africa's Development
in the 21st Century**

**Edited by
Kenneth C. Nwoko, Ph.D &
Omon M. Osiki, Ph.D**



Ilishan-Remo, Ogun State, Nigeria.

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DYNAMICS OF CULTURE AND TOURISM IN AFRICA

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CONFLICTS AND THE DEGRADATION OF CULTURAL ENVIRONMENT IN AFRICA

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Introduction

Decades of conflict in Africa have left indelible marks on both the physical and cultural landscape of the African peoples. This chapter consequently investigates the eroding effect of conflict on physical cultural heritage like the desecration of monuments in Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan and Mali. The vestiges of war have also affected sacred forests, sites and grooves in the West African rainforest spreading across Guinea and Liberia. On the other hand, the loss of cultural sites due to mass migration into refugee camps also features as major fallout of conflict in Africa. The historical backgrounds of these conflicts are first outlined, then, the socio-cultural and environmental impacts of these conflicts are subsequently examined alongside recommendation for recovery and future protection.

The Physical aspects of African cultural heritage remain the most prominent and obvious tourist attractions available on the continent. For the purpose of this chapter, physical or tangible cultural heritage will be classified into three categories outlined by Kaspars Vecvagars.

- A. **Monuments:** architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of feature, which are of outstanding

universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.

- B. **Groups of buildings:** groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science.
- C. **Sites:** works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites, which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view.¹

The locations of such a cultural heritage and its interaction with the non-physical and social aspects of African culture represent what is referred to in this chapter as “cultural environment.” The relics and monuments left behind by ancient civilizations are profound examples of Africa’s cultural heritage. Religious buildings, sacred groves, sacred forests and geographical locations, which represent natural heritage, are also very rich aspects of the subject matter. The festivals, rites and ceremonies, which native Africans utilise in order to interface with these tangible aspects of their heritage, produce the present cultural identity associated with the various African groups. The interaction of religious beliefs, language, philosophy and the tangible physical monuments and sites creates a highly potent cultural environment. This environment is crucial to social, political and economic development of the African peoples. For centuries, it has evolved and represented a platform for political revolution, social and economic advancement especially with regards to tourism.

In South Africa for instance, the need to recreate a new nation-state draws heavily from the cultural environment of the ‘Rainbow Nation.’ The country has focused on working to unite her

diverse population through their rich culture and heritage. As a re-branded entity, the Rainbow Nation, South Africa provides an example of how the past can be renegotiated through its cultural environment and a future African identity forged and used in uniting disparate communities within the nation-state.² Nigeria on the other hand has been leaning more and more towards its cultural environment for unity in a much troubled background of ethnic diversity. Its cultural environment has produced the concept of “Naija”, a term representing a single nation with no ethnic divide, with one single cultural consciousness. The term encapsulates a new Nigeria with an integrated cultural fabric in which the heritage of all ethnic groups, are the collective identity of the Nigerian.

Both the tangible and intangible aspects of this cultural environment have faced the danger of extinction from different challenges. Environmental degradation, climate change, demographic pressure, and modernisation have all contributed in damaging Africa’s cultural heritage and environment. War and conflict, however, remained the most prominent of these challenges. For more than three decades, the phenomenon has displaced millions of people who are disconnected from their cultural heritage as internally displaced persons and refugees of war and as such have problems transferring cultural knowledge to their children thereby tearing the fabric of cultural environment.³

Conflict has also been the source of the destruction of monuments, ancient relics, sacred groves and forest. In North, West and Central Africa for instance museums, mosques and churches have been destroyed while serving as military control points or as places of refuge for civilian populations. Sacred forests have also been targeted under suspicion of sheltering clandestine meetings of opposition forces. Some sacred grooves have even been deliberately

hacked down in an attempt to shatter supernatural protection in times of war.⁴ War has promoted looting of cultural artefacts and wanton destruction starting from pre-colonial to colonial and post-colonial periods of African history.

Conflicts and Africa's Cultural Heritage

Long before the advent of European colonialism, Africans had engaged in inter-tribal wars. These wrecked havoc on the cultural landscape of the people. The impact of these conflicts on the tangible aspects of African cultural heritage were however limited bearing in mind the fact that the purposes of these wars were mostly for imperial expansion. The nature of conflicts that eventually resulted from European contact however impacted differently on the cultural heritage of native Africans. European imperial expansion into Africa was largely characterised not only by the plundering of food and capture of prisoners of war, but by looting of African artefacts which proved to be of great value for western museums and art collectors. This has been a global enterprise for western imperialism long before the “Dark Continent” was opened up by European explorers. Imperial clashes and colonial wars throughout the history of Africa testify to this trend but some of them stand out prominently as discussed below.

“The Magdala Tragedy” of 1868

The sacking of Magdala by the British in 1868 represented one of the earliest and most significant incidences of the looting and destruction of vast numbers of Africa's cultural heritage. The attack on Magdala in Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia) was prompted by the imprisonment of the British Consul, Duncan Cameron by the Ethiopian Emperor Tewodros II.⁵ The Emperor was provoked into this action when the British government ignored a letter he wrote

requesting their cooperation. He viewed this as a slight and may have overplayed his next action in order to provoke a response.⁶ As expected, the British sent a military expedition to Ethiopia in 1867 to free Cameron and other British prisoners that the Emperor held captive in the fortress of Magdala. The battle that followed in 1868 compelled the Emperor to sue for peace after releasing the prisoners. The British however, insisted on a full unconditional surrender to which the Emperor declined and committed suicide instead. The city and fortress, a standing monument of hundreds of years of Ethiopian civilization was sacked and burnt to the ground.⁷ This constituted huge loss to Africa's cultural heritage. Today, the fortress and city could have played a profound role in the tourism industry of Ethiopia thus, enabling economic development.

Magdala was a treasure trove of rare artefacts and very ancient and valuable manuscripts. Over a thousand manuscripts were stored in the fortress alone. When the city was sacked, the fortress was looted by British soldiers and most of these valuable manuscripts were sold off or destroyed.⁸ According to Henry M. Stanley, the loot collected by the soldiers were transported, on 15 elephants and nearly 200 mules, to the nearby Dalanta plain to be auctioned to raise money for the troops.⁹ The auction raised over £5000 for the troops and Sir Richard Holmes of the British Museum's Department of Manuscript purchased the most valuable of the ancient books and manuscripts. Through his efforts, the British Museum/Library acquired no fewer than 350 of Ethiopia's finest manuscripts, many of them beautifully illuminated, while a further six exceptionally well decorated specimens were retained in the Royal Library at Windsor Castle, where the Emperor's cap and imperial seal were also deposited.¹⁰

About 200 other volumes looted from Magdala were subsequently acquired by the Bodleian Library in Oxford, Cambridge University Library, the John Rylands Library in Manchester, and several smaller British collections. The Magdala loot include numerous Bibles, theological treatises, and lives of saints, most of them beautifully illustrated making them of fundamental importance to the study of Ethiopian art and culture.¹¹ Other significant artefacts which were looted include two of Tewodros's remarkably fine tents, made of gaily coloured cloth which now reside in the Museum of Mankind.¹² Others include two solid gold crowns and ten *tabots* or holy alter slabs.¹³

Today, tourists still visit the Magdala but are greeted with the barren hilltop where the fortress once stood. Its imposing presence and historic significance lost forever. The treasures of its ancient manuscripts now adorn glass casings of European museums for tourists to Europe who bring in huge income to the establishments that display these treasures. The deficit it represents to Ethiopian development is quite pronounced. Although several attempts have been made by the Ethiopian government at various times to retrieve these treasures, only few have been returned.

The Sacking of Kumasi in 1874

The Ashante Empire in West Africa was at the height of its power in the late 19th century. It controlled a huge territory that covered the Gold Coast and its hinterland. As early as 1824, the British had come into intense competition with the Ashanti resulting into series of wars that the Ashanti won. Things came to a head once more when in 1871 the British bought the Dutch Gold Coast from the Dutch, including Elmina which was claimed by the Ashanti. The Ashanti promptly invaded the new British protectorate.¹⁴ What followed was considered the Third Ashanti War. The British

dispatched General Garnet Wolseley with over 2500 troops to confront the Ashanti.

By 1874, Wolseley's campaign had earned him a victory over the Ashanti. The Asantehene (king) abandoned the capital, Kumasi and fled north. What followed was a tragedy that was characteristic of European imperial conquest. The city was looted and burnt to the ground. The great palace of the Asantehene, a valuable piece of cultural heritage was lost. Among the artefacts looted or burnt were gold topped regalia staffs; royal stools beautifully carved and ornamented with gold and silver; seven gold masks each weighing several ounces and gold decorated muskets.¹⁵ Other artefacts include much of the golden treasure of King Kofi Kakari of Ashanti. Among these were gold rings, daggers, swords, and trophy heads of virgin gold.¹⁶ The return of these Asante artefacts has been the desire of the Ghanaian authorities, which have been working towards the realization of this dream.

The Benin Punitive Expedition of 1897

The Benin Kingdom flourished in the 17th and 18th centuries in the mid-western area of the present day Nigeria. The people developed a highly skilled culture of bronze casting, which was famous worldwide. At the height of its power, the kingdom began to clash with British interest over control of the Niger River trade. The kingdom as well as its ruler, Oba Ovonramwem was thus, seen by the British as obstacles to free trade on the Niger and needed to be subdued. Consequently, a punitive expedition of 1200 British soldiers was sent to Benin in 1897, led by James Phillips.¹⁷ The ensuing conflict was brutal; some historians refer to it as the Benin Massacre. The city was quickly sacked and looted. The British ransacked the palace for booty to help pay for the cost of the expedition and came up with

the incredible cache of priceless bronze and ivory artefacts numbering over 2400.¹⁸

The cultural fabric of the Benin was irreparably torn as what was left of the palace and the city was torched. The city burnt for five days and what was left of its art and architecture of hundreds of years was razed to the ground. Most of the artefacts looted by the soldiers were ritual and religious artefacts used to keep dynastic records and periodic events of the people of Benin.¹⁹ This cultural environment, which dated back to the 12th century, also served as a historical archive of Benin culture and chronological history was consequently destroyed by the British Punitive expedition. The loot was auctioned off to museums and private collectors all over the western world. The Benin royal family and the Nigerian Government have on several occasions made formal requests for the return of these valued artefacts but have met with little success to date. Below is a list of artefacts and their locations.

Table. 1 Benin Artefacts in Museums all Over the World

SN	CITY	LOCATION OF ARTEFACTS	NO OF ARTIFACTS
	Berlin	Ethnologisches Museum	580.
	Chicago	Art Institute of Chicago 20, Field Museum	400
	Cologne	Rautenstrauch-Joest- Museum	73
	Glasgow	Kelvingrove and St, Mungo's Museum of Religious Life	22
	Hamburg	Museum für Völkerkunde, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe	196
	Dresden	Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde	182
	Leipzig	Museum für Völkerkunde	87
	Leiden	Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde	98
	London	British Museum	900
	New York	Metropolitan Museum of Fine Art	163
	Oxford	Pitt-Rivers Museum/ Pitt- Rivers country residence, Rushmore in Farnham/Dorset	327
	Stuttgart	Linden Museum-Staatliches Museum für Völkerkunde	80
	Vienna	Museum für Völkerkunde	167

*Source: African Studies Central Connecticut University*²⁰

The 1936 Italian Invasion of Ethiopia

Several years after the British invasion of Benin, the Italian invasion of Ethiopia in 1936 by the Italian army resulted into greater looting and devastation of the cultural heritage of the Ethiopian people. Pietro Badoglio, the first Italian Viceroy of Ethiopia stole half the 1,700,000 Maria Theresa dollars found in the Bank of Abyssinia. With this money he constructed a huge villa in Rome, in which he proceeded to deposit 300 cases of Ethiopian cultural artefacts flown from Ethiopia by the Italian Royal Air Force. The second viceroy, Rodolfo Graziani, in the same vein, carted away 79 cases of Ethiopian artefacts. Attilio Teruzzi, the Minister of Italian Africa, on the other hand stole no less than four truck-loads in just one visit in 1939.²¹ The scale of loss during this period was unparalleled in history, leaving the cultural fabric of the country scared forever.

Among the loot taken by the Italians were several priceless artefacts, which include a statue of the Lion of Judah which represented the national emblem of the Ethiopian nation. Several royal and ecclesiastical crowns; a number of paintings from the walls of the Ethiopian Parliament and the Ethiopian state archive.²² Several crown were also taken from the important medieval monastery of Dabra Libanos, and one of the famous Obelisks of Aksum, which dated back to the early fourth century AD was also removed.²³ It is impossible to quantify the value of these cultural treasures taken by the Italians. However, years of negotiations followed after the Second World War resulting in the return of the Lion of Judah statue, the Parliament paintings and the state archives. Although the Obelisk of Aksum was returned only recently, the crowns and large amounts of other valuable artefacts still remain unaccounted for. The Ethiopian government has

continued to put pressure on the Italian government for their return to date.²⁴

Modern Wars and Conflict in West Africa

From the dawn of the 20th century, West Africa has been the theatre of several wars and ethno-religious conflicts. These conflicts impact heavily on the cultural fabric of West Africa in a very profound manner. Ethnic groups were displaced, museums and physical monuments destroyed. The Nigerian Civil War (1967-1970) represented one of the earliest and most devastating of these conflicts. The war resulted in the loss of over 2 million lives and millions of dollars worth of property. It was largely fought in the south-eastern part of the country with the Igbo ethnic group suffering the most casualties.

At the outbreak of the war, there were only four functional museums in the country (Esie, Jos, Ife and Oran). The Museum in Oran that captured the essence of the eastern and southern part of the country was a major repository of the artefacts and material culture of the Nigerian peoples. Unfortunately, its location as at the time of the war placed it in the middle of the conflict. The museum hosted 661 out of the 800 known Oran Kepi figurines.²⁵ Troops occupied the museum in 1967 and all the artefacts were removed to Umuahia. When Umuahia came under severe bombing, the collection was relocated to Orlu. When the war ended in 1970, Orlu became a refuge of some sorts and the inhabitants, who were unaware of the importance of these wooden artefacts, used them as firewood. Only 116 artefacts survived.²⁶ The devastation of this set of cultural heritage was appalling and the artefacts were lost forever. Like the case of Oran in Nigeria, other institutions of cultural preservation in West Africa were also affected by different conflicts over the decades. In Guinea-Bissau, violence in 1975 resulted in the

near total destruction of the archives of the National Institute of Studies and Research when soldiers occupied the archive building. The Museum of ethnography on the other hand lost a huge amount of its collections to the conflict.²⁷ Also, as a result of the war, all cultural events and the strengthening of syncretism of cultural unions were prohibited.²⁸ The Liberian National Museum before the first Liberian Civil War contained artefacts, antiques and archival materials numbering over 5000 objects. Most of these were lost during the war as the museum came under shelling and was looted and vandalised.²⁹

More recently, the civil war in Mali resulted in the destruction of major heritage sites in the city of Timbuktu in northern Mali. Known as the “City of 333 Saints”, Timbuktu reached its height of fame as a centre of Islamic learning in the 15th and 16th centuries.³⁰ It was regarded as the world centre of Islamic learning, culture, spiritual and intellectual heritage. In 1988 United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), named it a World Heritage Site. In the city, is located three ancient mosques built in the 14th century; the Djingareyber, Sankore and Sidi Yahia Mosques.³¹ 16 important mausoleums and cemeteries containing the tombs of 333 saints of Islam are also located in the city. Most importantly, the city houses 700,000 manuscripts on religion, law, literature and science in more than 60 private collections.³²

The importance of these manuscripts cannot be over stated. Scholars in contemporary times, who studied Timbuktu’s Arabic language manuscripts, consider them to be among the glories of the Medieval Islamic world.³³ The manuscripts include surveys of breakthrough in Islamic and Greco-Roman Astronomy, religion and tradition of Sufi Islamic saints, development of mathematics and a

wide range of the Qur'an, books of poetry, history and scholarly treatises. All these literary treasures were traded alongside commercial articles in Mali's vibrant markets thus, spreading its possession among several families that passed them down the generational line³⁴

The Tuareg rebellion in January 2012 had led to the formation of a breakaway state of Azawad in the north of Mali. The ancient city of Timbuktu was occupied in April subsequently leading to the desecration and destruction of its cultural heritage.³⁵ Armed groups in Timbuktu destroyed nearly 14 mausoleums classified as World Heritage Sites. The rebel groups damaged several mosques including the Djingareyber and Sidi Yahia. The cities museums including the Musée Arsène Klobb were vandalised and looted while the El Farouk monument, emblematic of the city, was completely razed.³⁶ Although the rebels were dislodged by the French army in January 2013, thousands of priceless manuscripts were lost in the process as the fleeing rebels burnt down structures as they vacated the city.

Lost Treasures of Egypt and Recent Conflicts in North Africa

For time immemorial, Egypt, the land of pharaohs, had been ravaged by one conflict or another. The various dynasties had come and gone fighting off invaders from the Assyrians to the conquering armies of Alexander the Great. A great number of significant Egyptian cultural edifices and artefacts have been plundered or destroyed during these wars. In the 19th century however, the impact of conflict on the cultural fabric and environment of Egypt was profoundly affected by the Napoleonic wars and the world wars.

Napoleon's thirst for conquest soon turned to Africa after he had conquered most of Europe. The land of the Sphinx and the great pyramids presented quite a temptation and in 1798 Napoleon's

armies marched against Egypt and brought her under the sprawling French Empire. Strangely enough, Napoleon's incursion into Egypt was not altogether destructive. Although a good number of artefacts were looted by the French, including the Rosetta Stone,³⁷ the expedition also resulted into the development of the Institute of Egypt in Cairo which was created to propagate European cultural ideas to the East.³⁸ After the defeat of Napoleon, most of his cultural loot from European countries was returned to their countries of origin,³⁹ except for the Rosetta Stone, which was however confiscated by the British.⁴⁰

The Arab spring which brought about the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 remains one of the most significant events that have impacted heavily on the cultural landscape of Egypt. The violent uprisings made room for wide scale looting and destruction of priceless artefacts in Cairo and other Egyptian cities. During the violent uprisings, looters ransacked dozens of archaeological sites and broke into store houses throughout the country including Abydos, Abu Sir, Giza, Dashur, Lisht, Saqqara and Quntara. Most importantly the Egyptian Museum in Cairo was looted extensively.⁴¹ Since 2011, looting and damage of artefacts continued unabated such that by 2013 the Malawi Museum in Minya had lost 1040 of its 1089 artefacts on display.⁴²

In the wake of the Arab Spring, North African countries experienced conflicts of varying degrees. In Libya, NATO Bombs partially destroyed ancient Roman sites of Leptis Magna and Sabratha.⁴³ Also significant was the fact that the so-called treasure of Benghazi, around 8,000 bronze, silver, and gold coins and other artefacts from the ancient city of Cyrene near modern-day al-Bayda was reported to have disappeared from a bank vault.⁴⁴ An all out civil war broke out in Libya leading to massive destruction of

infrastructure all over the country. The cultural fabric of the country was also affected as national monuments, archaeological digs and museums came under attack. Part of the Museum of Libya in Tripoli was looted during the fighting. The Apollonia Museum, Tolmeitha Museum, and Benghazi Museum were also heavily looted.⁴⁵ This conflict impacted on the tourism potentials of the country by affecting the stream of tourist visitors, holdings of archaeological excavations and the loss of thousands of artefacts.

In the horn of Africa, the 1998 border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea did not leave the cultural landscape unscathed. Upon its retreat to her original border in 2001, the Ethiopian Army used tanks to crush and destroy one of the oldest standing pieces of cultural heritage in Eritrea, the Monolithic Stele in Belew Kelew. This was a monument that dated back to the 3rd Century BC belonging to the pre-Akusmite period of Ethiopian history.⁴⁶

Impacts of Conflict on Flora, Fauna and other Natural Heritage Sites

Forest represents very important natural heritage sites especially in Africa. West and Central Africa retain some of the largest rain forest in the world. These forests represent a key aspect of the cultural heritage of the African peoples who live in and around them. They retain religious significances and often represent an embodiment of the people's economic existence. Many significant shrines, sacred grooves and ancestral forests are located in this vast preserve of rain forest. Urbanisation, illegal logging and climatic factors have all contributed to eroding this cultural heritage. In the instance of conflict however, these forests have experienced fast progressive damage that has been difficult to repair. Rebel groups often find refuge in these forests thereby endangering their state as cultural and natural heritage sites. The Virunga, Kahuzi-Biega, Okapi, and

Salonga forests in the Democratic Republic of Congo are all under the endangered list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites because of conflict. The same is the case with the Comoe in Ivory Coast and the Rwenzori in Uganda.⁴⁷

Natural heritage constitutes a veritable part of the cultural heritage of the peoples within these rain forests. The destruction of cultural sites within these ecosystems is accompanied by extreme damage to fauna of the forests that are part and parcel of the people's cultural heritage. Several species of animals in the rain forest feature prominently in the cultural fabric of native Africa. For instance elephants, porcupines, monkeys, chimpanzees, zebras and several other animals fall within this category. These creatures are integral part of African folklore, art, dance and theatre.

The Elephant for instance, is revered amongst many African cultures. In several African fables, the Elephant is regarded as the wise chieftain that settles disputes among other forest animals.⁴⁸ Hence, among the Ashanti in Ghana, dead elephants in the forest are given the due respect of a chieftain with a befitting burial.⁴⁹ Cultural artefacts produced from Ivory are highly valued in African culture and are often used for royalty and religious paraphernalia. The impact of war on the dwindling population of the African elephant is very significant. Considering the role this animal plays in African culture, its extinction will not only impact the tourism industry, but badly scare the landscape of African culture as a whole.

War in several regions of Africa has resulted into extreme poaching in these natural habitats hastening the extinction of some of these animals while others have been put on the endangered list. During the 1979 war in Uganda for instance, a massive decline in the population of elephants was recorded in the country's forest reserves.⁵⁰ In Congo (Zaire) on the other hand, African elephants,

which once constituted about 20% of the total continental population, are believed to have been drastically reduced by recent civil wars and migrations of refugees into protected natural habitats in the country.⁵¹ The poaching of gorillas also increased dramatically in the Congo as a result of the ongoing conflict in the region.⁵² The presence of insurgents in these forests is characterised by indiscriminate logging especially for the purpose of funding the conflict. The Liberian Civil War is a case in point here. The conflict lasted for 14 years of intermittent warfare and was funded largely from the illegal diamond trade and excessive logging. Timber has been a major source of income for Liberia thus; it easily transformed into a conflict resource that was heavily exploited by the Taylor regime to obtain weapons. The Oriental Trading Company (OTC), a logging company was one of the many companies granted logging concessions by the Taylor regime in exchange for weapons.⁵³ In the absence of logging regulation during the conflict, sacred shrines and grooves within these rain forests were completely lost.

Conclusion

The wanton destruction owing to conflicts on Africa's natural and cultural heritage has truly had profound impacts on the cultural environment. Age-old traditions have been lost as the artefacts for these ceremonies were either destroyed or looted. The social and religious psyche of the people have been irreversibly impaired and traumatised. This is a challenge that UNESCO recognises and has been working to put in place international instruments that would prevent damage to cultural heritage during conflicts. Most prominent among these instruments is the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This was adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its seventeenth session in Paris on the 16th of November 1972.⁵⁴ Although other

international conventions on the subject had existed before this, the 1972 convention is particularly aimed at preventing illegal trafficking of priceless historical and cultural artefacts which were stolen or looted during conflicts.⁵⁵

Cultural monuments that are natural fixtures or immovable are most vulnerable to the impact of war and other conflicts in Africa. UNESCO in conjunction with African governments has devised several means of protecting these cultural monuments. Based on the 1972 convention,⁵⁶ the Declaration of World Heritage Status on certain cultural monuments, especially in Africa has given them global recognition and attracted funds for their preservation and protection. Consequently every year the organisation releases funds and cooperates with government and NGO's to preserve and protect this cultural and natural heritage. These efforts may not be foolproof against war and conflict in Africa but they have gone a long way in preserving Africa's cultural fabric and environment.

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