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Cultural Organization

**Form for Dissertation/thesis/diploma/master thesis on WORLD HERITAGE  
to be sent to UNESCO, [wh-info@unesco.org](mailto:wh-info@unesco.org)**

**Name:** Ahmad Hamed

**Surname:** Dehzad

**Your academic institution:** Anhalt University of Applied Sciences

**Street Address of Institution:** Seminarplatz 2a

**City:** Dessau-Roßlau

**Postal Code:** 06846

**Country:** Germany

**Institution E-mail:** susanne.maree@hs-anhalt.de (Staff member - College of Studies)

**Institution telephone:** +49 (0) 3496 67 5919

**Institution website:** <https://www.hs-anhalt.de/en/start-page.html>

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**Supervisor of thesis (1<sup>st</sup>):** Prof. Damoun Vahabi Moghaddam

**Institution of Supervisor:** Anhalt University of Applied Sciences

**Address:** Seminarplatz 2a, Dessau- Roßlau, Germany

**Supervisor's e-mail:** Damoun.VahabiMoghaddam@hs-anhalt.de

**Supervisor of thesis (2<sup>nd</sup>):** Prof. Dr. Andrea Haase

**Institution of Supervisor:** Anhalt University of Applied Sciences

**Address:** Seminarplatz 2a, Dessau- Roßlau, Germany

**Supervisor's e-mail:** a.haase@raumstruktur.de

**World Heritage/UNESCO resources used:**

- UNESCO Archives
- World Heritage Website
- The 1972 World Heritage Convention
- UNESCO World Heritage List
- UNESCO's Strategy for Action on Climate Change
- UNESCO's Culture in Emergencies Toolkit
- The 1954 Hague Convention
- Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage

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This thesis examines the main challenges faced by the UNESCO World Heritage Center in protecting and preserving heritage sites in times of conflict. The study focuses on three case studies: the destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas by the Taliban in Afghanistan, the destruction of cultural heritage sites by ISIS in Iraq, and the destruction of cultural heritage sites by ISIS in Syria. The study also includes a literature review on the challenges of heritage site protection and preservation in times of conflict, as well as a theoretical framework for analyzing the study's findings.

The study finds that the UNESCO World Heritage Center faces a range of challenges in fulfilling its mission in conflict zones, including lack of funding and resources, political instability, and the complexity of working in conflict zones. The destruction of cultural heritage sites in conflict zones has a significant impact on social, economic, and political systems, including the loss of cultural identity and the erosion of social cohesion. Protecting and preserving cultural heritage in times of conflict is therefore a critical imperative, not only for the preservation of our shared cultural heritage, but also for promoting international understanding, cooperation, and peace.

The study also finds that the destruction of cultural heritage sites in conflict zones is a complex and multifaceted issue, and that a range of approaches and strategies are needed to effectively address this issue. These include emergency safeguarding measures, capacity building and training programs, and advocacy and awareness-raising initiatives. The study recommends increasing funding and resources for heritage protection and preservation in conflict zones, promoting greater international cooperation and coordination, and strengthening the legal and institutional frameworks for heritage protection and preservation.

Overall, the study highlights the critical importance of protecting and preserving cultural heritage sites in times of conflict, and offers important insights and recommendations for improving the protection and preservation of cultural heritage sites in conflict zones. The study underscores the need for continued research and collaboration in this important field, and offers important insights into the challenges and limitations faced by the UNESCO World Heritage Center and other stakeholders in this endeavor. The study's findings suggest the need for greater attention and action to protect cultural heritage in conflict zones, and offer important lessons and recommendations for policymakers, practitioners, and scholars working in this field.

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