Aims and Objectives:
To investigate the possessions of people from contemporary war-torn Middle Eastern communities and the stories and messages that these possessions present.

Method:
The research attempted to identify what types of material culture and ‘stuff’ is perceived valuable today by minority groups and why. Such artefacts often carry powerful stories and can be argued to have their own biographies, telling stories about the objects and about themselves.

By using letters and photographs from the Gertrude Bell archive as well as speaking to a network of people from the Beyond Destruction project and clients from St Luke’s, Wallsend, we can begin to see how objects both brought from the Middle East, as well as objects gathered on journeys and once here in Newcastle will be potential artefacts for discussion, and how significant these objects are.

Conclusion:
Talking to these people exposed one clear conclusion, that the most important possession someone could have is first and foremost, their family. Whilst objects like photographs and wedding rings were also important, so was technology and things associated with education. Overall, these objects provide these individuals with a sense of identity, whilst putting less value on things and more value on family.

References
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jmgs/summary/v026/26.2.1-igisiz.html