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The Antiquities Market

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A Retrospective and a Look Forward

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For 20 years (1974–1993), the “Antiquities Market” section of the Journal of Field Archaeology provided news and commentary on the illicit traffic in antiquities and on issues of cultural heritage relevant to field archaeologists from around the world. Much has happened in more recent years; military conflict, natural disaster, development, political or religious extremism, calculated looting, and the illicit sale of antiquities all combine to jeopardize the very existence of archaeology. The commodification of material culture is among the most pressing issues on the archaeological agenda. Links between collecting and looting continue to be hotly debated, and recent investigations illustrate how archaeological research may also unintentionally spur looting. Legislative efforts attempt to curb the plunder of sites and the illicit sale of antiquities. What is clear from the various efforts and questions is that globalization is bringing us closer together, and that we need a concentrated international initiative to document and preserve the archaeological record. Concrete proposals for such an initiative are required. The restoration of the “Antiquities Market” section is intended to reopen dialogue on these pressing issues by discussing specific sites in jeopardy and instances of looting, highlighting current trends, and encouraging all those who value the past to protect cultural heritage.

Introduction

It is more than a decade since the last appearance of the “Antiquities Market” section in the *Journal*. A great deal

has happened in the interim: some development projects have threatened and destroyed sites, while others have helped to preserve areas of cultural and ecological importance. Wars and military occupations have continued to wreak havoc on the archaeological record in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq. Customs officials have seized artifacts and have repatriated them to their countries of origin; sting operations conducted by United States Customs and the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the United Kingdom’s Scotland Yard have exposed smuggling rings; and looters have been arrested and collectors have been vilified. National and international legislation has been passed and court battles have been won and lost. Yet the plunder of archaeological sites and museums and the sale of antiquities continue at a staggering pace. As reflected in the growing marketplace for antiquities, consumer demand for artifacts remains high, and the negligible consequences for looters, local communities, middlemen, dealers, and collectors apparently make looting worth the risk. Almost every essay, paper, presentation, or report on this subject condemns the loss of knowledge and states that public awareness through education is the answer to the problem. Yet there remains a disjunction between theory and practice over the causes of looting and potential solutions to the looming problems it poses. In order to examine the nuances in this debate, the “Antiquities Market” section will investigate the relationships between supply and demand of looted antiquities, the role of the contemporary collector, the new role of the museum, and the roles of funding and academic institutions, as well as the responsibilities of professional archaeologists to integrate heritage protection into their research programs.

In this essay we address specific issues and problems, highlight current trends, and encourage those who value the past to work to protect it for the future. We discuss the need for archaeology to include strategies for cultural heritage management. This need has never been clearer: crisis-level situations exist in many regions of the world, with

plunder, trafficking in antiquities, and development among the main culprits. We focus on the international sphere and the role of the United States in the global setting, referring the reader to recent publications for more in-depth analyses of cultural heritage management (e.g., Brodie, Doole, and Renfrew 2001; Gerstenblith 2001; Kane 2003; Lynott and Wylie 2000; Zimmerman, Vitelli, and Hollowell-Zimmer 2003).

The definition of what constitutes cultural heritage in archaeology is constantly evolving. For many years the majority of archaeologists defined cultural heritage as the information contained in the archaeological record: sites, their environs, and artifacts. Over the past decade, the framework of archaeological investigation has expanded to include the effects of research on local communities (Hodder 2003; Meskell 2003; Mortensen 2001), the development of archaeo-tourism as a result of colonial, national, and academic agendas (Joyce 2003; Meskell 1998; Silverman 2002), and the increasingly clear link between fieldwork, publication, pillage, and the antiquities market (Brodie and Tubb 2002; Brodie, Doole, and Renfrew 2001; Smith, *in press*). Governments, institutions, and archaeologists have begun to examine the benefits as well as the problems of claiming “ownership” of the past more carefully. As people begin to ask more questions about the full scope of the archaeological enterprise, archaeologists have an increasingly diverse and challenging set of responsibilities. Our focus in this essay is primarily on the material consequences of damage to the archaeological record with analyses of social and political issues reserved for future contributions.

The Destruction of Cultural Heritage

The destruction of the archaeological record takes many forms. One of the primary motivations for looting remains the monetary value of movable goods, but political and social programs can act as destructive agents in cultural heritage as well. Among the more egregious cases are the state-sponsored destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas in Afghanistan and the looting of Iraqi sites and institutions.

In March 2001, the Taliban demolished the two giant Bamiyan Buddhas in the Hindu Kush region of Afghanistan. The Taliban's advance announcement of their intentions demonstrates the increasingly contentious role of political and religious institutions as custodians of the past. Unsuccessful attempts by the international community to thwart the destruction of the statues—perfectly staged for maximum exposure to on-looking news cameras and journalists—serve as reminders of the irreplaceable nature of the past. This example of premeditated destruction raises questions regarding ownership and protection of

cultural monuments by states. Future reconstruction plans highlight a range of considerations for conservation, replication, and presentation of the past, while preserving the site's integrity and recalling its barbarous demolition.

The destruction, at times deliberate, of monuments and archaeological material in the course of armed conflict is an ever-present theme in heritage protection. In March 2003, U.S.-led Coalition Forces invaded Iraq. With evidence of archaeological destruction from the previous Gulf War and documentation of the concomitant plunder by Iraqis (Gibson 1997; Russell 1997), archaeologists warned both the British and American forces of the real potential for massive looting and site damage, but little was done. The failure of the Coalition Forces to plan accordingly for the protection of Iraqi sites and museums, especially the Iraq National Library and Archives and the Iraq National Museum, both located in Baghdad, and the ancient site of Babylon, resulted in widespread pillage by locals and, in the case of Babylon, substantial damage by Coalition Forces (Bahrani 2004). Archaeologists from around the world provided expert assistance in compiling databases of lost items and information about site condition and location (Brodie 2003; Gibson 2003; Zimansky 2003). The systematic plunder of museums and the widespread looting of sites indicate a calculated local knowledge of the monetary value of particular artifact types and where to find them, pointing to a strong correlation between strategic looting and market demand.

The events in Iraq and elsewhere demonstrate that looting occurs because there is an international market for artifacts, a fact that archaeologists continue to stress. Others—predominantly collectors and dealers—claim that a market for antiquities alone does not spur looting and they call on foreign governments to open sites, museum store-rooms, and other collections to those interested in excavating, preserving, and purchasing antiquities, claiming that private collectors could buy and hold finds and the sale of the not-so-fancy or duplicate finds could fund excavations; proponents of this approach assert that such activities would not trigger additional plunder (Brodie 2002: 10–11; Krowitz 2003). New research should investigate this claim. Past and current auction house publications, such as those of Sotheby's (New York and London) and Christie's (New York and Paris), and a host of on-line websites (e.g., The Barakat Gallery) enable one to track the open market. Data derived from such sources can be compared with reports from the field: each year a number of archaeologists conduct fieldwork that includes assessment of site condition and pillage; each year a number of new publications appear that highlight particular areas, artifacts, and time periods. By combining these data sets one should

be able to track past and current market trends and correlate them (at least to some extent) with areas pillaged, as well as with major publications and academic research. Such an approach would also allow for a relative assessment of artifacts pillaged, based on looted sites and monuments, that do not appear on the open market, providing a rough assessment of the size of the black market. Compiling these statistics would allow for independent testing of the link between the demand for antiquities, the plunder of archaeological sites, and the role of scholarly publication.

Several studies illustrate the validity of such an approach and support the link between the antiquities market and the ransacking of sites. Gill and Chippindale's (Gill and Chippindale 1993; Chippindale and Gill 2000, 2001; Chippindale et al. 2001) landmark quantitative studies document not only the looting of sites on the Cycladic Islands of Greece, but also the damage done to our knowledge of Cycladic archaeology by looting and collecting, particularly the construction of idealized canons based on fakes that have led to unsubstantiated academic claims of "value" in Bronze Age Cycladic life. Other recent studies of Classical antiquities and the market, specifically Elia's (2001) work on Apulian pottery and Nørskov's (2002) analysis of collecting fine Greek pottery, further underline the value of this type of analysis. Similar research on the Mesoamerican market shows a correlation between legal sanctions on specific areas (i.e., the 1991 emergency United States Memorandum of Understanding for the Peten in Guatemala) and the shift from "the Peten" to the "Maya Lowlands" as an area-label by Sotheby's in their auction catalogs (Gilgan 2001). Other studies document the calculated pillage of areas for polychrome ceramics (Reents-Budet 1994: 292) and stone vessels (Luke and Henderson in press) to meet market demand. Studies also point to a growing correlation among scholarship, demand, price, and forgeries (Brent 2001; Lapatin 2001). In addition, the showcasing of sites and artifacts may actually contribute to their looting, as suggested by the 1997 *National Geographic* article on Copán royal tombs (Stuart 1997) and their subsequent plunder (Agurcia 1998). While it is possible that highlighting the looting of specific artifacts and contexts may thwart additional pillage and collecting, data from Lydia in western Turkey, based on the famous Lydian Hoard case, suggest that the pillage and ransacking of Lydian monuments and collecting of Lydian-style material continues (Roosevelt and Luke in press).

Ongoing and future research will shed further light on the putative ties between collecting and pillage. The thrill of the chase, the lure of the "art" object, and an uninformed love of antiquity are the main criteria for so many collec-

tors and, archaeologists argue, the reasons for the disregard for context and site destruction. Collectors argue that context is important and that they do not intentionally disregard it. Yet they are not advocating it either. Why not? We need more research on the drive behind collecting and the apparent disregard for context. Studies focused on the roles of archaeologists in the history of collecting (Hoving 1993; McIntosh, Togola, and McIntosh 1995; Muscarella 2000; Nørskov 2002; Ramage 1990, 1992) and the current collecting ethos (Burnett 2004; White 1998) are places to begin.

Less clear is how academic interpretation, publication, and fieldwork on specific objects and areas increase their value and trigger plunder. Archaeologists must take a more active role in protection efforts and understand the effects of their own research. The correlation between archaeological fieldwork, museum exhibitions (including those showcasing objects with context), academic discourse, and the market for antiquities needs to be more carefully considered. Many archaeologists continue to deny these links, placing blame on the collectors, while emphasizing their own roles in preserving archaeological context. Archaeology is about context. Yet archaeological context without analysis is wasted information. The field of archaeology has drifted away from collection-based research, particularly collections from excavations conducted many years ago that fill the storerooms, basements, and annexes of many museums. This trend may be responsible, in part, for the overflowing storage depots of unanalyzed, recently excavated materials. It may also be one of the many reasons for the growing gulf in communication among responsible or "good" collectors (cf. McIntosh, Togola, and McIntosh 1995), museum curators, and field archaeologists. It also allows collectors to pose as "rescuers."

Field archaeologists can provide further information on the scope and complexity of the antiquities trade by being more engaged during their field seasons. It is the field archaeologist who most directly observes the results of looting and has the opportunity to explore the conduits and destinations of the trade in antiquities as well as its social contexts. Numerous reports of looting confirm its truly epidemic nature. Of the cases noted by archaeologists around the world in a given year only a handful are reported and investigated, mentioned in passing in season reports, and often omitted completely from final publications. Archaeologists need to make every effort to track looting in the regions where they work and to understand how the networks function. Over the years, archaeologists have become more involved with local communities when planning museums and establishing tourist zones within archaeological areas. For a variety of reasons (politics, per-

mits, safety), archaeologists have been reluctant to probe the looting culture and the networks in place for trafficking antiquities. They need to be fully aware of the true scope of the antiquities market as it pertains to their research areas (cf. Smith in press). From pillage to the auction house, from excavation to the storeroom, ethical questions of site protection and excavation strategies, artifact conservation and study, understanding the collecting ethos, and collaboration with governments and local communities are now parts of the professional responsibility of archaeologists.

This responsibility requires archaeologists to consider their place in the wider world of heritage management and ask themselves difficult questions about how to move forward in their work. Archaeologists often do reap professional benefits from clandestine operations. High-profile and well-funded research programs often benefit from plunder. Tainted tunnels and leveled occupation areas provide access into mounds, often exposing murals, tombs, architectural sequences, and other surfaces that would take decades to excavate properly. Moreover, how do we reconcile our discipline's emphasis on not publishing unproven material with its lack of concern regarding research funded by wealthy collectors, often disguised within prominent institutional research programs? What do we do with the unproven, but clearly important, material that is unpublished? How can we defend our position as responsible caretakers of the archaeological record when our own record of publication is so dismal? How do we continue academic research in a world in which archaeology has become intertwined with national identities and political debates? Finally, how can we be more sympathetic to the economic, social, and historical needs of our local hosts while pursuing our own research?

Legislative Response

Legislation alone does not halt the pillage of sites, but it can provide legal safeguards and remedies for nations suffering from the loss of cultural heritage to the illicit antiquities market. In many areas of the world, regional cooperation allows for a more integrated approach to stemming site plunder and the illicit transfer of artifacts. Because boundaries of ancient cultures and modern politics rarely coincide, it is increasingly important that nation states sharing ancient culture areas work together to ensure regional legislative compatibility.

The two events discussed above—the Bamiyan Buddhas and plunder in Iraq—created a stir and resulted in a number of new declarations and proposed changes to existing legislation. In response to the Buddhas' destruction, UNESCO passed the *Declaration Concerning the International*

Destruction of the Cultural Heritage (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization 2003). The Declaration covers circumstances outside of the 1954 Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict and calls on the international community to thwart deliberate and calculated destruction of cultural heritage (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 470).

Initiated by the devastating events in Iraq, the United Nations passed the *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1483* (2003), demanding that all member states return looted material and prohibit the trade or transfer of pilaged items from Iraq (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 470). In June of 2004 *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546* (United Nations Security Council 2004) reaffirmed the commitment to protect Iraq's cultural heritage by encouraging states to "respect and protect Iraq's archaeological, historical, cultural, and religious heritage." Switzerland—a country with a significant market for Classical and Near Eastern antiquities—has an import ban on cultural heritage from Iraq (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 470). In addition, the United Kingdom passed the *Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act of 2003* (2003), which makes it an offense to traffic (either knowingly or unknowingly) in "tainted cultural objects" from anywhere in the world. Such objects are specifically defined under the Act as those "illegally excavated or removed from a site of historical, architectural, or archaeological interest" (Brodie 2003: 3).

A number of bills that would bar the import of materials illegally removed from or looted in Iraq were introduced in the United States Congress (e.g., H.R. 2009, H.R. 3497, and H.R. 1047). One of the first, H.R. 2009, sought to amend the *United States Convention on Cultural Property Implementation Act* (1983), the legislation implementing the 1970 UNESCO Convention in the United States. This bill would have given the President of the United States authority to impose import restrictions in egregious situations on behalf of nation states for unlimited duration regardless of whether the respective nation is party to the 1970 UNESCO Convention, currently a requirement (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 471). This legislation would have also extended the period of bilateral agreements from five to ten years (renewable for additional ten year increments) and would have avoided the lengthy deliberations by the Cultural Property Advisory Committee. Two examples of the benefit of such legislation would have been coverage for materials from Afghanistan, which is not party to the 1970 UNESCO Convention, and for the period of occupation in Iraq. The collecting community actively lobbied against H.R. 2009. In the wake of much debate, H.R. 1047, the *Emergency Protection for Iraqi Cultur-*

al Antiquities Act of 2004 (2004), passed in both the U.S. House and Senate on 7 December 2004. This Emergency Act allows the President to implement emergency import restrictions of material from Iraq under the Cultural Property Implementation Act, excusing Iraq from the initial request requirement. The emergency expires in 2009. There has yet to be similar legislative action by the United States specific to cultural patrimony and the situation in Afghanistan or other countries faced with massive looting.

At a more general international level, the 1995 *UNIDROIT Convention on the Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects* and 1970 *UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illegal Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property* (International Institute for the Unification of Private Law 1995; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization 1970) target protection of archaeological sites and the transfer of objects. Both UNIDROIT and UNESCO provide the means for a nation to recover stolen or illegally exported cultural heritage, including antiquities. Unlike the 1970 UNESCO Convention, UNIDROIT makes no distinction between illicit excavation and theft, giving states party to it a legal framework for recovering looted artifacts under existing stolen property laws (Gerstenblith 2001: 213). What is more, it requires that all stolen materials be returned, regardless of whether the purchaser acted in good faith to secure clear title. Countries have been so reluctant to become party to UNIDROIT that only 11 have ratified the Convention.

With the continued rise in looting and expansion of the antiquities market, more market countries are implementing the 1970 UNESCO Convention. The United States was one of the first major market countries to ratify the Convention in 1983. In recent years other major market and transit countries have ratified the Convention: Denmark (2003), Japan (2002), Switzerland (2003), and the United Kingdom (2002). A number of countries offer blanket recognition of other nations' laws regarding cultural heritage (e.g., Canada, France, Peru). Major market countries (e.g., the United States) and transit countries (e.g., Switzerland), however, usually require additional legislation on a country-by-country basis in order to establish such cooperation.

The initial stages of the United States' implementation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention were thoroughly documented by Ellen Herscher and Karen D. Vitelli in the "Antiquities Market" section of the *Journal* in the 1970s and 1980s. The Cultural Property Implementation Act implements articles 7b and 9 of the 1970 UNESCO Convention in the United States. Article 7b deals exclusively with stolen items, that is material that is inventoried in a

museum, a religious or public monument, or similar institution; article 9 deals with resources that are not inventoried, that is, unexcavated objects. Under article 9, any country party to the 1970 UNESCO Convention may submit a request to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee of the United States Department of State for a Memorandum of Understanding (a bilateral agreement) to impose import restrictions at the United States border on certain categories of archaeological and/or ethnographic materials (renewable for additional five-year terms). Under section 304 a country may request a five-year Emergency Agreement, extendable for an additional three-year term. What many fail to understand about the Cultural Property Implementation Act is that it functions on a country-by-country basis only; each individual country must prepare and submit its own request to the Cultural Property Advisory Committee (CPAC). CPAC and its support staff at the Department of State neither actively solicit nor draft such requests. In addition to establishing import restrictions, the two countries pledge to control pillage, encourage research, and diminish the illicit trade in antiquities through various programs. CPAC meets to consider all requests, renewals, and mid-term reviews; all meetings are announced in the Federal Register and testimonials and evidence from archaeologists working in the areas under review are encouraged.

Over the past decade Memoranda of Understanding have been agreed to with a number of countries: Bolivia, Cambodia, Cyprus, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Italy, Mali, Nicaragua, and Peru. One agreement, with Canada, has been nullified. A request from the Government of Colombia was received in April 2004 and was the subject of a recent CPAC review (September 2004). In September 2004, a request from China was submitted. As part of each Memorandum, collaboration between the United States and the respective country is encouraged. Among the projects enacted under the various agreements are the construction of the Guzman National Museum in San Salvador, El Salvador (Gardiner 2004), an internship program in Peru, and the long-term loan program between Italian and United States institutions (Gardiner 2003). These Memoranda, particularly the growing number with Central American countries, have proven to be useful in combating the illicit trafficking of artifacts into the United States (Luke 2003).

Switzerland used the Cultural Property Implementation Act as a model for its implementing legislation of the 1970 UNESCO Convention, which takes effect in 2005 (Federal Assembly of the Swiss Confederation 2003). The Swiss Federal Council may enter into country-by-country agreements to protect cultural heritage. As in the "emergency"

option under the Cultural Property Implementation Act, additional measures may be taken under extreme circumstances. The Swiss Act further modifies that of the United States Act by making each agreement permanent, eliminating the need for continued bureaucratic renewal and review.

Since looting is not confined to the land, in late 2001 UNESCO adopted the *Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage Act*, which establishes a strong international management framework with an emphasis on scientific excavation aimed at preventing unregulated salvage of underwater resources (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization 2001). State parties require their citizens to obtain permits for all excavations and report all discoveries of underwater cultural heritage, even if they lie in foreign waters. The Act will not go into effect until at least 20 member states ratify it (Eck, Gerstenblith, and Phelan 2002: 608).

Finally, decisions are made every day regarding cultural heritage protection at the local, state, and national levels in the United States and elsewhere, but there are only a handful of archaeologists who are actively involved in such policy-making. For over 30 years there have been calls for archaeologists to take a more direct role in the protection of the world's cultural heritage through a variety of programs. These needs remain the same today. Initiatives include community education, course development, publications, and conference papers focused on data from the field. It is also imperative that archaeologists submit statements and concerns to the CPAC, support legislative efforts, and inform friends and colleagues about how purchasing and vetting antiquities—whether illegally or legally—contributes to the commodification of culture and to the collective loss of knowledge. In fact, if an archaeologist from a market country (e.g., the United States) is working in a country that currently does not have sufficient protection under national or international legislation, such as a bilateral agreement with the United States under the CPIA, would it be a step in the right direction to help draft a request and see it through the bureaucratic process? Albania, Belize, Costa Rica, Egypt, Greece, Syria, and Turkey are among the many source countries that do not have bilateral agreements or similar legislation with the United States, but do have a number of foreign (predominantly North American and European) researchers conducting archaeological fieldwork.

Legal Cases and Repatriations

In light of the many acts of legislation described above, it is no surprise that the amount of litigation involving antiquities has grown. In the last three years alone there have

been significant decisions in case law associated with cultural heritage, ranging from large fines and prison terms to seizures and repatriations.

Prominent price-fixing scandals at two of the largest auction houses—Sotheby's and Christie's—are a clear indication of the intrigue and disreputable tactics that exist within the world's billion-dollar auction business (Mason 2004). In fact, Watson's (1997) study of Sotheby's dealing in illicit antiquities generated such an uproar that Sotheby's terminated their London antiquities sales. Following on the heels of this closure, Sotheby's New York announced in August 2001 that it would end its regular biannual sale of Precolumbian material. In contrast, the new Christie's in Paris now holds regular auctions of Precolumbian material.

Legal cases have not been confined to the big auction houses. Private dealers have also been investigated. The high-profile trial in New York of Frederick Schultz, former president of the National Association of Dealers in Ancient Oriental and Primitive Art, concluded with a guilty verdict under the United States *National Stolen Property Act* (1948). Schultz, convicted of conspiring to deal in stolen Egyptian artifacts, is now serving a 33-month prison sentence. *United States v. Schultz* (2003) highlights the nefarious practices of the illegal trade in antiquities and sets a strong precedent for future cases, particularly in the heart of the antiquities trade: New York City (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 476). This ruling, in conjunction with the well-known 1977 *United States v. McClain* (1979) case, also demonstrates the strength of the National Stolen Property Act, which is a criminal law, unlike the Cultural Property Implementation Act, which is a civil, import law (Eck and Gerstenblith 2004: 475–476; Gerstenblith 2003).

In addition to these more familiar cases and often as a result of pressure from them, a significant number of objects have been returned to or requested by source nations. Notable examples include the 2000 return of the Italian Phiale Mesomphalos by Michael H. Steinhardt (Shapreau 2000); the 2003 repatriation to Honduras of 279 objects, looted from the Naco region and prosecution of the Ohio dealer (*United States v. Douglas Hall* 2004); the 1999 return to Guatemala by the Denver Art Museum of a carved wooden lintel taken from the Classic period site of El Zotz in the Petén (Schuster 1999); and the 2001 return to Greece of 274 artifacts stolen from the Museum of Ancient Corinth in 1990, some of which were consigned to Christie's New York (Eck, Gerstenblith, and Phelan 2002: 614). Artifacts continue to be seized at U.S. entry points and repatriated under the various Memoranda of Understanding. A few of the more recent cases include material from El Salvador (Gardiner 2004), Guatemala (Hegstrom

2003), and Peru (unpublished United States Immigration and Customs Enforcement press release 2004). Tired of social niceties, countries are turning up the pressure for return of antiquities, such as repatriation requests by Egypt (Lufkin 2002) and Italy (Eakin 2002). Finally, a number of highly politicized repatriation cases continue, including those concerning the Axum Obelisk, Weary Hercules, and the Parthenon Marbles.

In response to the increase of repatriation requests a number of renowned art museums issued the "Declaration on the Importance of Value of Universal Museums," which focuses on the potential "threat to the integrity of universal collections posed by demands for restitution of objects to their country of origin" (unpublished statement by Cleveland Museum of Art 2003; Eck and Gerstenblith 2003: 573). The Declaration clearly states that "[t]he international museum community shares the conviction that illegal traffic in archaeological, artistic, and ethnic objects must be firmly discouraged." This same group of museums draws a line between past and current collecting practices and the role of repatriation. They argue that "[o]bjects acquired in earlier times must be viewed in the light of different sensitivities and values, reflective of that earlier era" (Cleveland Museum of Art 2003). The implication is that repatriation as a standard policy rests on the evolution of the museum-collecting ethos, a sentiment echoed by the Association of Art Museum Directors in their revised guidelines issued in June 2004 (Association of Art Museum Directors 2004). How this statement will play out in practice at each of the museums, particularly with regard to de-accessioning and future purchases, remains to be seen.

The numerous cases of repatriation and high-profile guilty verdicts document the greater exposure of illicit trafficking in cultural patrimony and raise questions about how we monitor the trade, track looting, and behave as ethical archaeologists. Collaboration among organizations such as UNESCO, International Council of Museums (ICOM), International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), and various law enforcement agencies (Interpol, the United Kingdom's Scotland Yard, and the United States' Federal Bureau of Investigation) has led to greater monitoring of archaeological sites as well as action regarding looted and stolen material. The "Red List" and "100 Missing Objects" of the International Council of Museums—databases of categories of African, Cambodian, European, Iraqi, and Latin American archaeological objects—the International Foundation for Art Research, the Art Loss Register, and local registry systems all monitor the movement of cultural heritage. One of the most successful independent initiatives is the Illicit Antiquities Research Centre of the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Re-

search in Cambridge, United Kingdom, established in 1998. It works closely with antiquities departments and organizations, the academic community, and art dealers.

Evidence of the growing prominence of cultural heritage in academic discourse is found in the increasing number of conferences, symposia, and sessions at annual archaeological meetings that focus on looting, cultural heritage protection, tourism and site development, and the trade in antiquities. The annual Society of American Archaeology conference now holds the "Ethics Bowl," an event that considers hypothetical cases that may confront the archaeological community. In theory the plethora of media sources and the Internet, another venue for the sale of antiquities (Lidington 2002), allow us all to be watchdogs.

Concluding Remarks

Archaeologists and collectors, once close colleagues, have drifted further apart. Many art historians and museum curators continue to participate in both spheres. Most agree—at least in theory—that archaeological context is invaluable. They disagree on how best to protect ancient sites and their contents, and whether the sites and objects should be held in private or public hands. While many lament the pillage of recent years, looting is an age-old practice. The histories of archaeology tell disturbing stories about site treatment—massive endeavors to transport entire monuments abroad and tunnel deep into mounds in search of grand results: prized, exquisite, and rare objects. With a shift in cultural values and the rise of the scientific approach to the past, archaeologists have come to understand and to demand context. Yet in our quest for scientific knowledge we have forgotten, not necessarily deliberately, that there is an antiquities market, that there are active and engaged collectors, and that our research informs this sphere. Archaeologists can no longer pretend that this market does not concern them just because they are not active participants. We need to understand the collecting ethos, the secretive world of moving illicit antiquities, and local attitudes towards the destruction of the archaeological landscape. Failure to do so will undoubtedly result in the continued irreplaceable loss of context.

The original concept behind the "Antiquities Market" section in 1974 was "to provide news and commentary on the illicit traffic in antiquities," one of the "central concerns of the Association for Field Archaeology" (Wiseman 1974: 215). These concerns are as real and immediate today as they were then. Professional archaeologists need to be more vocal, more persistent, and more aware of their responsibilities. For our part, we need to take a forceful stand against the looting of archaeological sites and devote more

of our time to understanding the political and economic contexts of looting, collecting, and destruction of sites and cultural materials. Current data indicate that the problem is getting worse, not better.

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