

Looting Matters for Classical Antiquities: Contemporary Issues in Archaeological Ethics

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Forty years have passed since the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. In spite of this there have been major scandals relating to the acquisition of recently-surfaced antiquities by public museums and private individuals. The Italian government has obtained the return of over 100 antiquities from North American collections and these have been displayed in a series of high profile exhibitions. Greece and Egypt have made successful claims on other material. Some dealers appear to be willing to handle material that surfaced along similar routes in spite of this increased awareness of the problem of looting. North American museums have now adjusted their acquisition policies to align them with the 1970 Convention.

The first decade of the 21st century has seen a major change in the attitude to recently-surfaced antiquities. The seizure of the photographic archive in premises belonging to Giacomo Medici in the Geneva Freeport has allowed Italy to request the return of well over 100 objects (Watson 1997; Watson and Todeschini 2006; Gill and Chippindale 2007b; Silver 2009). A series of high profile North American museums have been handing over millions of dollars' worth of acquisitions without resorting to the courts (Gill and Chippindale 2006; Gill and Chippindale 2007a; Gill and Chippindale 2008; Gill 2009e). The defence that the objects were purchased 'legally' whether in Switzerland, the United Kingdom or North America no longer holds. Museums now recognise that it is important to check collecting histories to ensure that objects had surfaced prior to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (Gill 2009b). As a result museums are no longer willing to take a risk on making an acquisition that had the potential of attracting considerable adverse publicity. The dispute over the Sarpedon krater, once owned by New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, is enough to remind people of the major issues (Volpe 2009, 44-45, no. 11; Gill forthcoming).

The present research on the impact of looting is now over twenty years old. It emerged from two key incidents. One was the launch of the popular magazine, *Minerva*, that seemed to celebrate the market over the preservation of the archaeological record (Butcher and Gill 1990). The second was the arrival in Cambridge of images of Gandharan 'art' beautifully photographed in one of the London parks for a forthcoming London sale. The sculptures had no collecting histories and appeared to have been removed from the area of Afghanistan (and surrounding countries) in recent years.

These serendipitous events encouraged more detailed research. There were two key questions. What were the material consequences of looting and collecting? In other words, what was the damage to the archaeological record. What were the intellectual consequences? That is to say, how did looting impact archaeological knowledge? The initial project was on small marble sculptures from the Cyclades in the southern Aegean dating to the third millennium BCE (Gill

and Chippindale 1993; Chippindale and Gill 1993). The figures were from a clearly defined geographical area and are rarely found outside it. It was possible to quantify the number of figures that had been found in cemeteries; a few had also been found at settlement sites such as Phylakopi on Melos. It was possible to appreciate that some 85% of the corpus of figures had no recorded find-spot. If such a small percentage of figures came from known archaeological contexts, was it possible to work out if the figures were placed in graves with either women or men? Were there regional styles? Was it possible to attribute the figures to anonymous 'sculptors' (Getz-Preziosi 1987; Getz-Gentle 2001)? How do you interpret male figures? What was the purpose of the almost life-sized figures? How could the hundreds of fragmentary figures from the 'Keros haul' be explained (Sotirakopoulou 2005; Gill 2007; Renfrew et al. 2008)? Had the corpus of Cycladic figures been corrupted by the insertion of modern forgeries?

One dealer encouraged us to explore the situation further as he felt that Cycladic figures were not typical for classical collecting (Eisenberg 1995). Were Cycladic figures an anomaly? Our attention turned to a series of high profile public exhibitions of antiquities from several private collections held in North America and Europe (Chippindale and Gill 2000). This study suggested that the situation was in fact considerably worse. Private collectors appeared to be willing to buy objects without recorded histories. Further research continued to collect data on what was 'reasonable'. The research team selected the collecting history of a responsible university collection, The Ashmolean Museum in Oxford, and analysed the patterns of collecting (Chippindale et al. 2001). This was published alongside an overview of antiquities emerging on the London market (Chippindale et al. 2001) and on the internet (Chippindale and Gill 2001).

Our concerns about some of the material have been confirmed by the return to both Italy and Greece of parts of the private collections that were analysed in the initial study (Gill and Chippindale 2007a). Our methodological approach has also been adopted by others for analysing the collecting patterns for Apulian pottery from southern Italy (Elia 2001) and the trade in ancient coins (Elkins 2008).

The situation is changing. New Web 2.0 technologies give opportunities for contemporary comment as stories and issues develop (Gill 2009c; Gill 2009f). Thus questions can be raised about material appearing in sale catalogues. For example, a piece of Lydian silver appearing on the London market in 2007 appeared to be very close to the material returned to Turkey by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Bothmer 1984; Özgen and Öztürk 1996; Roosevelt and Luke 2006). It was withdrawn from sale on the eve of the auction.

Italy

Italy has done much to combat the issue of looting. The 2009 review of the 2001 Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Italy and the USA relating to 'the Imposition of Import Restrictions on Archaeological Material Representing the Pre-Classical, Classical and Imperial Roman Periods of Italy' has granted an opportunity to see what has been achieved.

First, the Italian authorities have clamped down on organised networks of dealers who handle the material (Watson and Todeschini 2006; Silver 2009). Raids on the premises of Giacomo Medici in the Geneva Freeport have attracted considerable attention. However the raids on Basel premises associated with Gianfranco Becchina were conducted in May 2002 and yielded some 5000 objects (Gill 2009g). In addition, Italian police have now had access to some additional 10,000 photographs and approximately 200 'bundles of receipts'

(Matsuura 2007a). Some three truckloads of antiquities have been returned to Italy (Jordans 2008); other material remains in Switzerland.

Second, the MOU encouraged Italy to investigate the 'routes' by which these objects have travelled from Italy to North America. One of the key figures in the trade of such material appears to have been Robert Hecht who is currently on trial in Rome. A study of the antiquities returned to Italy has revealed a list of recurring names for dealers and auction houses (Gill and Chippindale 2006; Gill and Chippindale 2007a). Such recently-looted antiquities continue to appear on the market; several were seized at a New York auction-house in 2009 (Gill 2009a, 65).

Third, Italy has been generous with its loans of archaeological material to North American museums, in part to fill gaps left by returns (see de Montebello 2009, 61). Such a scheme was envisaged by Maxwell L. Anderson in the 1980s when he recognised that 'acquisitions of antiquities will become increasingly difficult for American museums owing to financial and ethical considerations' (Anderson and Nista 1988, 7; see Butcher and Gill 1990). Anderson thus helped to create 'The Emory University Museum International Loan Project' (EU-MILOP) that supported a series of loan exhibitions: *Roman Portraits in Context* (Anderson and Nista 1988), *Syracuse, the Fairest Greek City* (Wescoat and Anderson 1989), and *Radiance in Stone* (Anderson and Nista 1989).

Fourth, there are reports that Italy is seeing a reduction in the number of reported archaeological sites that have been looted. There are probably several reasons for this. First is that Italian authorities are more likely to prosecute; second, that dealers and auction-houses are less willing to handle recently-surfaced objects; and third, museums and private collectors are wanting to avoid any unfavourable publicity that could follow any legal challenge from Italy.

Fifth, Italy has used a series of exhibitions, notably the two 'Nostoi' exhibitions in Rome and the one in the New Acropolis Museum at Athens, to demonstrate to the world its determination to reduce the destruction of archaeological sites (Gill 2009d; Volpe 2009).

The MOU with Italy will be the subject of further revision at a meeting in the spring of 2010.

The returns to Italy

Over 100 antiquities have been returned to Italy from five major museum: Boston's Museum of Fine Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Princeton University Art Museum (Gill 2009e). There have also been returns from Christie's and the Royal-Athena Galleries, as well as the private collection of Shelby White. The acquisition details for these items show that museums were continuing to buy recently-surfaced antiquities well after the 1973 Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) declaration on the Importation of Antiquities. Some 59% of the returns were acquired in the 1980s, and 27% in the 1990s (Fig. 1). This suggests that museums were willing to buy key objects even if there was no recorded history for the items.

There are some patterns that have emerged. One of the interesting groups consists of Apulian pots attributed to the Darius painter (Aellen, Cambitoglou, and Chamay 1986). The pottery by this 'hand' included the Boston amphora showing the murder of Atreus (formerly Boston inv. 1991.437; Padgett 1993, 115-18, no. 42). This had surfaced through Atlantis Antiquities in New York and Fritz Bürki & Son of Zurich. The amphora had been semi-purchased

by Shelby White and Leon Levy with a half share by the MFA (purchased 'with funds given by the Jerome Levy Foundation'). A second piece was a pelike in the J. Paul Getty Museum showed the return of Andromeda (formerly Malibu inv. 87.AE.23; Jentoft-Nilsen and Trendall 1991, 14-, pls. 198-200, 'European Art Market'). This had been purchased from Fritz Bürki & Son. A third piece was the Princeton loutrophoros showing the mourning of Niobe (formerly Princeton y1989-29: Princeton University Art Museum 1990, 47). This had been purchased and the vendor has not been disclosed. A fourth piece was a volute-krater in the Cleveland Museum of Art (formerly Cleveland inv. 1988.41). A fifth piece was a dinos from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art showing Herakles and Busiris (formerly New York inv. 1984.11.7). This last, which was purchased, is reported to have been identified among the images seized in the Geneva Freeport (Povoledo and Kennedy 2005).

These five pieces attributed to the Darius painter were acquired between 1984 and 1991. This is the period when there was substantial looting in southern Italy. Ricardo Elia has noted in a study of Apulian pottery,

An additional 31 per cent of the total corpus [of Apulian pots], more than 4200 vases, has surfaced between 1980-1992. Virtually all of these additional vases are undocumented and unprovenanced and are likely to have been looted from Italian sites (Elia 2001, 152).

Elia's work has been unwisely dismissed by some who wish to downplay the impact of looting in southern Italy (e.g. Ortiz 2006, 27; see also Brodie 2006, 9-10.). It is also interesting that the Boston catalogue of South Italian pottery had commented specifically on the Darius painter.

Recent years have seen a host of new vases by the Darius Painter with rare or unique mythological subjects ... (Padgett 1993, 114, under no. 41; see also Gill and Chippindale 2008)

The entry also mentioned 'three volute-kraters in Berlin, one with the raid on the camp of Rhesus (1984.39), one with the rape of Persephone (1984.40), the third with Phrixos, Helle, and the ram (1984.41)' (Padgett 1993, 114 under no. 41; see also Giuliani 1988, 6-15). These three kraters appear to have been part of a single grave-group acquired by Berlin (Fig. 2). There are four further volute-kraters (and the foot of an eighth), two amphorae, one hydria, eight fishplates, one large dish, three smaller dishes, and two skyphoi. Many of the pots fall into distinct workshop groups and share the same attributed 'hands' that is a common feature of tomb-groups (e.g. Group of Copenhagen 4223, Varrese painter, Underworld painter). All the pots appear to have been broken into fragments and carefully restored. The Berlin 'tomb-group' features in the *Medici Conspiracy* (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 109). Polaroids showing the Berlin material are said to have been found in the Geneva Freeport.

The third acquisition was the most important and took place in 1983 [the accession was in 1984]. This involved a group of twenty-one Apulian vases all coming from the same tomb. The photographs in Medici's warehouse didn't show all the vases, however, but just four of them in fragments, lying on the floor. In this case there were three series of Polaroids—one of fifteen photographs, another of six, and a third of two—that show the vases in various stages of restoration, the most important of which was a krater by the Darius Painter (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 361 n. 2).

The explanation continues:

All twenty-one had been offered to Berlin by one Christoph Leon of Basel on behalf of a Basel family, the Cramers. Professor [Wolf-Dieter] Heilmeyer examined the vases on the premises of the director of the Museum of Art and History of Geneva, Jacques Chamay ... Heilmeyer had spoken to the person who declared she had restored the vases, Fiorella Cottier-Angeli, who told him that the vases had been in very old chests and had reached Geneva 'in the nineteenth century' ... the overall price of 3 million marks had been paid to Leon (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 199).

It is not clear if there is any documented evidence that demonstrates that this 'grave group' was known prior to Heilmeyer's inspection of the material in Geneva. One puzzling issue is why Giacomo Medici should have polaroids of fragmentary pots that had reached Geneva in the nineteenth century.

The associations between different collections (and their sources) is reflected in the return of three fragments of a 'Pompeian' wall-painting from two separate collections. Two came from the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman collection, and one from the Shelby White and Leon Levy collection (Exhibition catalogue 1994, nos. 125 and 126; Bothmer 1990, no. 142) (Fig. 3). Maxwell L. Anderson, who wrote the catalogue entry for the Shelby White fragment, considered (Bothmer 1990, 201):

This section of fresco is part of the upper zone of a wall from a Second Style house. Various details, including the ornate Corinthian capitals with inlaid stones, the distinctive mask on the lintel, and the shields on the shelf to the left, suggest that it was completed by a workshop in the environs of Pompeii during the third quarter of the first century B.C.

The original setting was described (Anderson in Exhibition catalogue 1994, 251):

The superb illusionism of Second-Style Roman wall painting is brilliantly in evidence in this fragment from the upper zone of a Pompeian wall. To judge from the scale of the fragment, the room was intimate in scale and may have been a bed-room (*cubiculum*) or dining room (*triclinium*).

Anderson felt that one of the fragments from the Fleischman collection 'matches precisely' the Shelby White fragment (Exhibition catalogue 1994, 251-52, under no. 126). One of the Fleischman fragments was acquired through Fritz Bürki. There is also reported to be a fourth fragment of the wall-painting. Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini note the piece in their discussion of the ex-Fleischman Herakles fragment (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 119, 349; see also Exhibition catalogue 1994, no. 126):

... in dimensions, subject matter, and condition, in [Paolo Giorgio] Ferri's words, it 'would appear to be a twin to another fresco' seized in Geneva from [Giacomo] Medici.

Now that these fragments have been returned to Italy, it may be possible to reconstruct part of this damaged fresco.

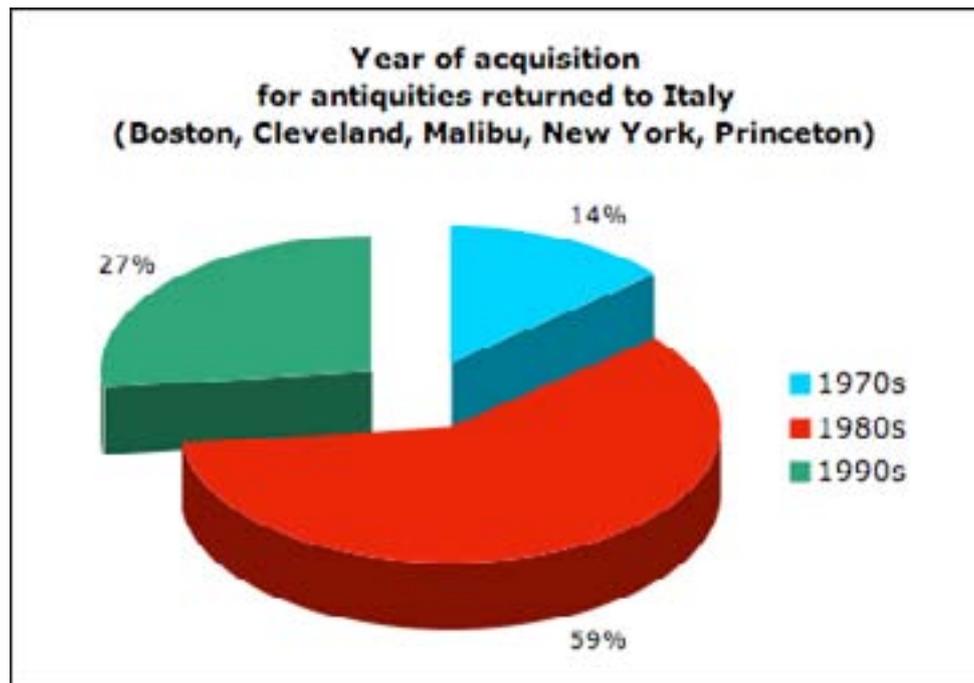


Fig. 1: Year of acquisition for antiquities returned to Italy.



Fig. 2: Apulian 'tomb-group' in Berlin containing kraters attributed to the Darius painter.
© David Gill.



Fig. 3: Tentative reconstruction of wall painting showing three fragments, two from the collection of Barbara and Laurence Fleischman, and one from the Shelby White and Leon Levy collection. The arrangement of the fragments has been created by David Gill and is intended to give an impression of the original design. It is not an accurate reconstruction though the fragments are at the same approximate scale. Dimensions: *Glories* no. 142: h. 86.2 cm, w. 86.5 cm; *Passion* no. 125: h. 91 cm, w. 80.5 cm; no. 126: h. 61 cm, w. 81 cm.

The Graham Geddes Collection

The implications of the Medici raid continue to be felt in the antiquities market. In October 2008 Bonham's presented the Graham Geddes Collection for auction. Geddes is an Australian collector and dealer who had links with A. Dale Trendall, one of the leading authorities on South Italian pottery (Trendall and Cambitoglou 1978; Trendall and Cambitoglou 1982a; Trendall and Cambitoglou 1982b). Parts of Geddes' collection had been on loan to Australian institutions such as the National Gallery of Victoria, and the Borchardt Library at La Trobe University. There was considerable publicity for the sale. A fragmentary Roman sarcophagus was marketed as having an 'Elvis' look (e.g. Howarth 2008; 'Are you Roman tonight? Statue of 'Elvis' chiselled 1800 years before his birth goes under the hammer', *Daily Mail* July 22, 2008). One of Geddes' pots, an Attic red-figured bell-krater attributed to the

Retorted painter, featured on the cover of the autumn number of *Bonhams Magazine*, and Sir John Boardman provided a short essay to support the sale (Bonhams 2008b).

Anybody familiar with material linked to Medici would have been suspicious of the sale, not least because the name 'Geddes' is written next to lot entry for a South Italian 'Apulian' bell-krater that surfaced at Sotheby's (an image from the sale catalogue is reproduced in Watson 1997, opp. 120). The krater was resold by Christie's in New York (December 12, 2002, lot 142, \$16,730) as Lucanian and attributed to the Anabates painter; it had been on loan to Monash University during the intervening period. Geddes had also been linked to a Lucanian nestoris that was returned to Italy from Boston's Museum of Fine Art (discussed in Gill and Chippindale 2006, 320 fig. 4, 325, no. 13). Twelve of the Apulian pots belonging to Geddes had surfaced at Sotheby's in London between 1981 and 1986, a period that had been well-documented for containing material that had been looted from archaeological sites (Watson 1997; Elia 2001).

As the sale approached the Italian authorities started to apply pressure. This was led by Francesco Rutelli, the former Minister of Culture, who had been instrumental in obtaining the return of objects from several North American collections. At a press conference held on October 9, 2008 Rutelli drew attention to the Bonham's sale and the presence of material handled by Robin Symes. The story was carried by *The Times* in London (Alberge 2008).

Bonham's eventually withdrew ten lots from the sale at the prompting of the Italian government (Bonhams 2008a). Among them was an Apulian hydria, attributed to the painter of the Berlin Dancing Girl, described by Chantelle Waddington (Rountree) of Bonham's as 'the most important' piece in the collection. At least seven of the withdrawn pieces had been purchased from Sotheby's in London between 1984 and 1989. One of them was the Attic krater that had appeared on the cover of *Bonhams Magazine* as a motif for the sale.

The inability of Bonham's to conduct a rigorous due diligence search on material they were due to auction was raised by Lord Renfrew in the House of Lords at the end of October 2009. He cited the events of October 2008 as evidence for the need for reform by those involved with the sale of antiquities:

Bonhams the auctioneers withdrew from its London antiquities sale at the request of the Italian Government some 10 antiquities, among them items formerly owned by the now sadly notorious dealer Mr Robin Symes. ... What is an auctioneer in this country doing, selling antiquities without a documented provenance? It is scandalous that this practice continues, and to put an end to it is one purpose of this amendment. There are serious matters here, which demand government attention (House of Lords, Hansard text, October 26, 2009, col. 987).

This revelation came in addition to the withdrawal of a Lydian silver kyathos from sale at Bonham's in October 2007 at the request of the Turkish government, and a fragment from the tomb of Mutirdis at Thebes (TT410) in May 2008 after intervention by the Egyptian authorities ('Egypt retrieves a 2,500-year-old stone relief from Bonhams auction house in London', *International Herald Tribune* June 30, 2008). It suggests that the management of Bonham's had been unwilling to address the issue of recently surfaced antiquities.

Robin Symes and his assets

One of the key dealers to emerge from the returns to Italy is Robin Symes (Watson 2004). His name is linked to at least seven items returned to Italy by the Getty (three formerly in the Fleischman collection), material from the Maurice Tempelman collection returned from the Getty and the University of Virginia Art Museum in Charlottesville, and at least two of the pieces returned to Italy by Shelby White (though one of them had previously been in the collection of the Hunt brothers) (see Gill and Chippindale 2007a, 217). In addition Symes supplied the marble *kore* that was returned to Greece by the Getty (Apostolidis and Brodie 2007, 65 no. 6). Symes also handled the ivory mask that is reported to have been found in Tuscany (Apostolidis and Brodie 2007, 41; Smart 2008, 20).

Among the items that have been linked to Italy is an Athenian red-figured volute-krater attributed to the Methyse painter and at present in the Minneapolis Institute of Art (MIA inv. 83.80: Padgett 1983-86 [1991]; Padgett 1984; see also Abbe 2005). The krater was acquired from Robin Symes in 1985 and is reported to have been 'in private collections in Switzerland and Great Britain for ca. 15 years before 1983'. Such unconfirmed information would make the krater surface for the first time in 1968 prior to the 1970 UNESCO Convention. It should also be noted that 'private collection in ... Great Britain' appears to refer to Robin Symes himself. Thus a dealer can be presented as a private collector. The Minneapolis is clearly on the list of objects being pursued by the Italian authorities (Smart 2008, 22). The MIA issue a press statement in November 2005:

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts has learned that an object in our permanent collection could be among a number of objects in American museums that the Italian government alleges to have been recently excavated in Italy. We have not been contacted by the Italian authorities about this object. We have seen only an electronic image of a detail of the shoulder of a vase, which we received from a Los Angeles Times journalist without any accompanying documentation. As a leading museum, we uphold the principle that all collecting be done according to the highest standards of ethical and professional practice. Although no contact or claim has been made, to date, by the Italian authorities, we are nonetheless taking the matter seriously, and, if after gathering the facts it is established that the Italian government has a legitimate claim, we will respond in an appropriate and responsible fashion.

The name of Symes is one that now urges extreme caution. Bonham's in London were forced to withdraw an Apulian krater from his 'collection' (presumably a euphemism for stock) when it was offered at auction in October 2008 (Bonham's 15 October 2008, lot 180; see Bonhams 2008a). The krater was reported to have been owned by Symes 'prior to 1980'.

One of the key remaining issues is what to do with Symes' assets seized in London. Some 17,000 antiquities, worth £125 million, are reported to have been found in 33 separate locations (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 254). It has been suggested that Italy has requested the return of some 1000 objects.

Italy is asking for restitution of some 1,000 artifacts from Symes's Trustees in Bankruptcy, according to Maurizio Fiorilli, the lawyer for Italy's Ministry of Culture who negotiated the return of the Euphronios krater and other treasures from America's museums (Mazur 2009).

Francesco Rutelli, as Minister of Culture, was said to have been in discussion with Margaret Hodge, a Minister in the British Department of Culture, Media and Sport (press release: Rutelli 2008). Investigations on behalf of the Michalidis family have continued to trace Symes' transactions (Townsend 2009). It is claimed that they throw 'fresh light on the murky world of antiquities smuggling'. The situation remains unresolved.

The Royal-Athena Galleries

The returns from North America have included not only objects from museums and a private collection but also a dealer. In November 2007 it was announced that Jerome Eisenberg of the Royal-Athena Galleries in New York would be returning eight antiquities worth \$510,000 to Italy (Migliaccio and Freeman 2007; David 2007). Among them was an Attic black-figured neck-amphora, attributed to the Leagros group, that had surfaced at a sale at Sotheby's London in July 1985, and an Attic red-figured column-krater attributed to the Geras painter that appeared at Sotheby's in December 1987. Three of the bronzes appear to have been stolen from museums in Italy during the 1970s: The Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Chiusi, la Soprintendenza archeologica di Ercolano (Napoli), and the Museo Archeologico Nazionale 'Spina' di Ferrara (see Volpe 2009, 36-37, no. 7).

The presence of two pieces that passed through Sotheby's is significant. Peter Watson has commented specifically on the two sales where the two items surfaced.

The printout showed that this company, Christian Boursaud, consigned for sale in the July 1985 auction some 104 unprovenanced antiquities (Watson 1997, 117).

Watson continued:

in the December 1987 sale which consisted of 360 lots, 101 were sent in by Editions Services. Once again, none of these antiquities had any provenance and again the shipment included twelve Apulian vases (Watson 1997, 120).

It is a reminder to all who sell or acquire cultural property to be wary of objects that passed through Sotheby's in London during the 1980s and early 1990s. Such objects confirm Eisenberg's concerns back in 1995:

I have no doubt unknowingly bought a number of objects legally from galleries and auction houses throughout Europe, especially in England, that might have once been exported illegally from their country of origin (Eisenberg 1995).

It appears that the returned material had indeed left Italy illegally.

Other returned antiquities had passed through the hands of Eisenberg. These included two Apulian pots from Boston and Roman wall-paintings from the J. Paul Getty Museum (Gill and Chippindale 2006, 320-21; Gill and Chippindale 2007a, 229 no. 25; Gill and Chippindale 2008). Eisenberg had acquired some of the material at Sotheby's in London, and from Palladion Antike Kunst in Basel. It should be noted that Eisenberg was earlier dismissive of the returns from Boston to Italy:

None of these are monumental works of art, and what fuss are [Italian audiences] going to make about this vase? ... Far more people will see it at the MFA (quoted in Edgers 2006).

The return revises Eisenberg's earlier position on Italian efforts to restrict the movement of archaeological material from Italy. At the time he described them as 'absurd' and 'oversimplified' (Gugliotta 1999). It now seems that Italian authorities had good cause to raise concerns about some of the archaeological material surfacing on the market.

The Miho Museum

Most of the Italian enquiries have led to North American collections. However one museum that has attracted attention is the Miho Museum in Japan (Watson and Todeschini 2006, 294-96). One piece of public evidence has appeared in the Robert Hecht/Marion True trial in Rome (Matsuura 2007b). An expert witness mentioned

... some artwork housed in the Miho Museum, including a decorative sculpture of marble from ancient Rome, known as an oscilla, were identified from pictures of stolen items seized from a smuggling syndicate by the prosecutors.

The images were presumably those seized from the Geneva Freeport (or possibly the Basel warehouses linked to Becchina). The Miho Museum does indeed have two marble oscilla in its collection, one with Artemis sitting on a rock, the other with Ganymede and Zeus in the guise of an eagle. Their earlier collecting histories are unstated.

The Miho Museum was established in the 1990s and yet was able to acquire some outstandingly fine antiquities. As these are likely to have been purchased on the market, questions remain about the vendors.

Copenhagen, Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek

The Italian authorities have also been turning to European museums. The Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek in Copenhagen is reported to have acquired material from Robert Hecht (Povoldo 2009; see also 'Ambassador mediates in a case of stolen artefacts', *Copenhagen Post* February 3, 2009). A list of material has been drawn up that included an acroterion of a winged sphinx, an Etruscan terracotta antefix, and terracotta reliefs of warriors on horseback. The complete list, submitted in December 2008, contains 100 items. The museum has rejected the case (Christiansen 2008).

Greece

In recent years Greece has been stepping up its campaign for the return of recently looted antiquities (Apostolidis and Brodie 2007). One of the most celebrated cases in recent years involved the Aidonia Treasure that had apparently been found in Mycenaean graves not far from Nemea in the Peloponnese. The items had due to be sold through the Michael Ward Gallery in New York in 1993 (Demakopoulou 1996; Demakopoulou and Divari-Valakou 1997). The J. Paul Getty Museum has also returned a number of items (see Gill and Chippindale 2007a, 229). These include a gold funerary wreath that seems to have been derived from

a funerary context in Macedonia. It was acquired in 1993 after passing through Switzerland. Two other pieces were acquired at the same time: a Boeotian funerary stele of Athanias that was purchased from a North American gallery in 1993, and a marble kore purchased from Robin Symes in 1993 (Getty Museum 1997, 34, 50-51; see also comments in Gill 1998).

Greece was able to reclaim a large-scale bronze sculpture that was seized in Germany in 1998. The piece, known as the 'Saarbrücken youth' is thought to have been found in the sea off Preveza (Apostolidis and Brodie 2007, 63, no. 2). A Swiss dealer, Jean-David Cahn, returned a marble funerary lekythos in the spring of 2008 ('Ancient lekythos returned', Athens News Agency April 21, 2008). The lekythos had been acquired from a Swiss-based antiquities dealer at the Maastricht Antiquities Fair in March 2007. The reason for its return has not been disclosed though it is likely that there was photographic evidence.

Greece has also been able to recover material stolen from its collections. These items include an Apollo from Gortyn on Crete that was excavated by Federico Halbherr, and stolen in 1991 ('Greece reclaims stolen Apollo statue', AFP June 14, 2007). The Apollo was handed over by Jean-David Cahn who had received it from a German collector who had purchased it from a British art dealer. Some of the material raided from the archaeological museum in Corinth has also been recovered after pieces surfaced at two New York auctions as 'The Property of an American Private Collector' in December 1997 and March 1998 (Apostolidis and Brodie 2007, 50-53; Bookidis 2007). The items were identified when they were subsequently offered for sale by a New York dealer. As a result 265 items were seized from a fish storage facility in Miami, Florida (Bookidis 2007).

Nostoi: From Rome to Athens

Much of the recent publicity relating to returning antiquities has concentrated on Italy. However the 'Nostoi' exhibition transferred from Rome to the new Akropolis Museum in Athens. This allowed objects returned to Italy to be placed alongside those handed back to Greece. Both countries had been using the photographic archive seized from Giacomo Medici.

One of the private collectors who has returned material to both countries was Shelby White. Nine items were handed over to Italy (Volpe 2009, 26-27, no. 2, 30-31, no. 4); and a tenth piece, on loan to New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, will be handed over during 2010. Two pieces have been handed over to Greece. The collection formed by White, and her late husband Leon Levy, was the subject of a study in 2000 (Chippindale and Gill 2000; Bothmer 1990; see also White 2005). The research indicated that 93% of items in the 'Glories of the Past' exhibition featuring their private collection had no recorded findspot. The analysis of the histories of the objects showed that some 84% had been known for the first from 1974 onwards (Chippindale and Gill 2000, 473); this was comparable with an earlier study of marble Cycladic figures (Gill and Chippindale 1993). Both figures were well above the total derived from a series of studies for a range of private collections in North America and Europe (Chippindale and Gill 2000, 476-77). The average for the lack of archaeology in the private collections was 75%, and the figure for known histories from 1974 onwards was 74%. White, in an interview for *The New Yorker*, dismissed this research as 'reducing the great collections of the world to meaningless numbers' (interview for Mead 2007, 60). Yet these numbers were meaningful. They suggested that some of the antiquities had surfaced in recent years through the illicit plundering of archaeological sites to provide material.

White returned two items to Greece in July 2008 (Bloom 2008; 'Greece strikes deal with US collector for return of 2 looted antiquities', *International Herald Tribune* July 11, 2008; 'US collector to return two ancient artifacts', *Kathimerini* July 12, 2008; 'New York collector to return 2 antiquities to Greece', *New York Times* July 12, 2008). The first was a bronze krater, dating to c. 340 BCE, that was used on the cover the exhibition catalogue of their 'Greek bronze vessels from the collection of Shelby White and Leon Levy' (Chi and Gaunt 2005, 24-25, no. 9). It has been suggested that the krater was found in Pieria, Macedonia (press release from the Hellenic Ministry of Culture; the comment also appeared in *The New York Times* July 12, 2008). A comparable bronze calyx-krater was found in 1986 by M. Bessios in a tomb within Toumba Pappa at Sevaste in Pieria (Thessaloniki, Archaeological Museum: see Vokotopoulou 1994; Barr-Sharrar 2008, 98, fig. 89. For the excavation of the tomb: Catling 1988/89, 68-69). At least one of the tombs in the *toumba* had been looted. A recent report has even suggested that the White krater and the one found at Sevaste came from the same workshop (Gill 2008b, with links to reports in the Greek press). The Shelby White krater was first noted in 1998 and its previous collecting history is unrecorded. Jasper Gaunt, who wrote the catalogue entry, suggested it was 'Greek, perhaps Attic', though he commented, 'The best stylistic parallels for the White/Levy krater may be found in examples associated with the Macedonian court; the silver wreath, for example, is almost identical to the one on the Derveni krater itself' (in Chi and Gaunt 2005, 24). The identification of the stolen piece was made by the Athens-based investigative reporter Nikolas Zirganos (noted in a press release from the Hellenic Ministry of Culture).

The second piece returned to Greece illustrates the issue of how lost contexts can have intellectual consequences. The object is the upper part of a funerary stele showing a warrior and a young man. It dates to the 4th century BCE. The stele fragment had appeared in the 'Glories of the Past' exhibition (Milleker in Bothmer 1990, 124-26, no. 97). No previous information or collecting history was provided. The two figures in the fragment are named: Menon above the warrior, and Kleobolos above the youth. In the catalogue entry Elizabeth J. Milleker tried to comment on the fragment's possible origins. She was reluctant to place it in Attica:

Although, in overall design and subject matter, the stele is similar to Attic grave reliefs of the late fifth and early fourth century B.C., it is difficult to determine where it might have been carved, for it has a number of unusual features.

Milleker pointed to a number of features that she felt indicated a non-Attic origin. First, the acroterion, that would have fitted on the upper part of the stele, 'must have been added as a separate piece of marble'. She noted the feature of two small holes with 'remains of iron dowels', used to attach it. A parallel for the feature was found on a relief in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (New York, MMA inv. 30.11.3). Second, the 'warrior differs from the Attic norm not only in the rendering of his drapery but also in certain details of dress'. The chiton was said to be 'very different from the complex, tubular style current in Athens during the late fifth and early fourth century'. The 'design' of the chiton that 'reaches to the middle of the warrior's upper arm, with a wide opening that extends to the level of his elbow at the end of the stele' was thought by Milleker to be 'typical of women's chitons'. Indeed, 'no ready parallel to the chiton depicted here comes to mind'. The helmet 'shows a curious deviation from the norm'; the ear appears to have been covered by the helmet. In addition, the presence of finger-tips on the left shoulder of the central youth suggested that was originally a third figure standing to the right. Milleker proposed, 'In all probability, it was a woman, who rested her right hand on the youth's shoulder'.

Milleker also noted that the warrior and the youth were standing too close to be in a handshake, a common iconographical feature of such stelai in Attica. She noted,

The warrior's lower arm is slightly advanced, and it is unlikely that the hand was empty. He might be imagined holding a phiale or a dagger ...

When considering the central youth, Milleker suggested that Attic iconography required that 'young men posed like this youth are usually shown alone, reaching down to a pet or a small servant boy, but it cannot be ascertained whether the youth here was accompanied'. Milleker summed up these discrepancies: 'The unusual details of the warrior's dress and the plain, flat rendering of his drapery suggest that this stele was not carved in an Attic workshop'. She continued, 'the stele seems to lack a certain clarity in the organization of its forms that is a hallmark of most Attic work'. As a result a conclusion was reached:

The stele must have been carved in an area of the Greek-speaking world, such as the Cyclades or the western coast of Asia Minor, where Attic influence was particularly strong in the late fifth and early fourth century.

She closed with this thought: 'Until a telling parallel for this particular relief is found, it is not possible to be more precise about its place of origin'.

Such comments now appear to be rather misplaced. It appears that the fragment fits the lower part of a stele found in a rural cemetery excavated by the Greek Archaeological Service near Porto Rapti in eastern Attica during the 1960s; the piece had been put on display in the Brauron Archaeological Museum (Brauron inv. BE6) (Fig. 4). Its excavator, George Despinis, spotted that the Shelby White fragment fitted (Despinis 1991/2). It thus appears that the Shelby White fragment is an example of a funerary stele carved in one of the rural workshops of eastern Attica. The 'unusual features' observed by Milleker are in fact no more than local variations within Attica. Indeed the lack of find-spot for the Shelby White fragment allowed erudite, but incorrect, comments to be used in its interpretation. Issues about the (lost) figure to the right, the (lack of) object in the right hand of the warrior, and the pose of the central youth are all explained. The figure to the right is in fact male not female. The warrior and the youth do not have a handshake. The right hand of the warrior is empty and lies along his upper leg; the right hand of the youth holds a hare, and his left a strygil and an aryballos.

Imagine the catalogue entry if the stele had been known to have been found in one of the rural cemeteries of Attica. The discussion would have been very different; but as it now stands there is little in the catalogue entry that has lasting value. This piece is a good reminder of the intellectual consequences of lost find-spots and the way that the corpus of knowledge is distorted as a result of such a loss. Connoisseurship cannot replace secure information derived from excavations.

The Michael C. Carlos Museum

The Greek Government has requested the return of three items from the Michael C. Carlos Museum at Emory University, Georgia, USA (Gill 2008a, with links to Greek newspaper reports). The three pieces are recent acquisitions: a marble statue of Terpsichore, a Rhodian

pithos, and a Late Minoan III larnax (Michael C. Carlos Museum inv. 2002.31.1, 2004.2.1, and 2002.34.1). The results of the negotiations have yet to be made public and the claim is apparently unresolved.

The museum has in the past been a pioneer in the way that it encouraged loan exhibitions of archaeological material (e.g. Anderson and Nista 1988; Wescoat and Anderson 1989; see also Butcher and Gill 1990).



Fig. 4: Marble funerary stele, 4th century BC. The lower part was excavated at Porto Raphti in Attica; the upper part was returned to Greece by Shelby White in 2008. Reconstruction by David Gill.

Republic of Macedonia (FYROM)

The return of the Shelby White calyx-krater to Greece raises another issue. A report in the Greek press suggested that the government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (FYROM) had also been trying to secure the return of the same krater (Gill 2008b, with links to Greek newspaper reports). This seems unlikely. It appears that Pasko Kuzman, the director of FYROM's Cultural Heritage Protection Office, has been seeking the return of the 'Koreschnica krater' that presently resides in a North American private collection ('Pasko Kuzman wants to return krater from New York', *Macedonia Daily*, November 7, 2006). It was apparently sold through Switzerland and then passed through the United Kingdom before being acquired by the unnamed collector.

The 'Koreschnica krater' was found in a monumental tomb on the north side of the river Vardar, to the north-west of Demir Kapja in FYROM. The looting apparently took place in the 1990s; one suggestion is that it happened in 1996. The burial chamber was located some 4.5 m below the present ground level and had been covered by approximately 3.8 m of rocks and rubble (Fig. 5). This does appear to have been some chance find but rather the deliberate opening of a tomb with the hope of acquiring objects that could be sold on the market. The rectangular chamber measured some 8.5 m by 3.5 m, and was 0.7 m high. The monumental krater was placed in a separate part of the chamber that measured 1.5 m by 1.5 m and was 1.8 m high; cremated remains were placed inside (Fig. 6).

The 'Koreschnica krater' is said to be of Trebenishte type. A bronze krater was found in a cemetery at Trebenishte, north of Lake Ochrida, in the closing months of World War I (Lamb 1929, 135). This location is inside the present boundaries of FYROM close to the border with Albania. Such archaic kraters are extremely rare. Conrad M. Stibbe in a discussion of the volute-krater from Trebenshte noted,

We have now a second bronze volute krater with the same pattern on its foot. See my forthcoming publication in the volume in memory of Leon Levy (Stibbe 2006, 321 n. 57, 318).

A bronze volute-krater of Trebenishte type has been on loan to the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston (MFAH) from Shelby White. The curatorial staff at MFAH informed me that the krater was 'included ... as a part of the exhibition of bronzes from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection' (e-mail of February 8, 2008). No further information about the krater's collecting history has been made available.

Among the finds in the tomb at Koreschnica were some 18 bronze helmets, some of 'Illyrian' type, and two bronze shields. Around the tomb were placed three small bronze warriors. Three possible candidates passed through the New York market in 1998; they were acquired by a British-based collector. The Koreschnica tomb is a reminder that major archaeological sites continue to be looted in Europe to provide material for private collectors. Some reports have suggested that in the 15 years from independence in 1991, around one million objects have been smuggled out of the country (cited by Owen 2009, 138 n. 12).

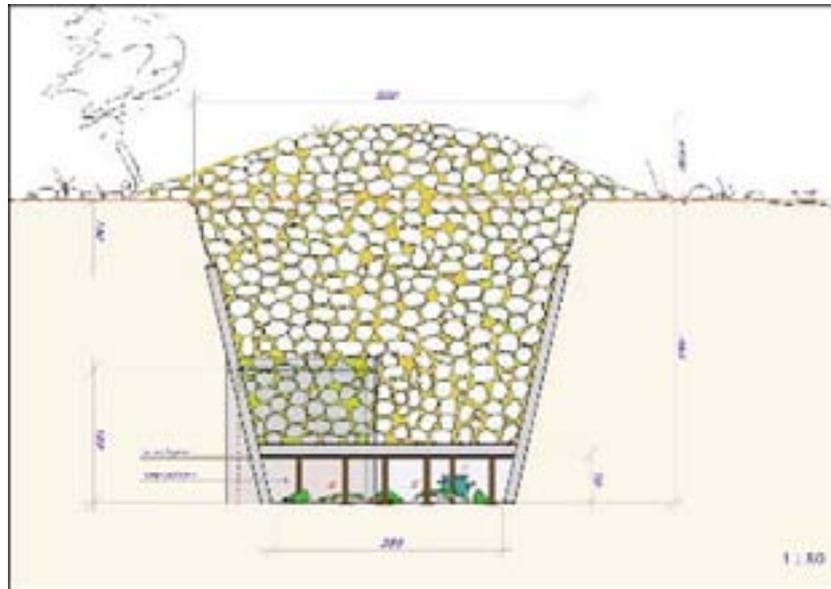


Fig. 5: A section through the Koreschnica burial mound, FYROM. The roof of the chamber has had to be supported by modern iron pillars.

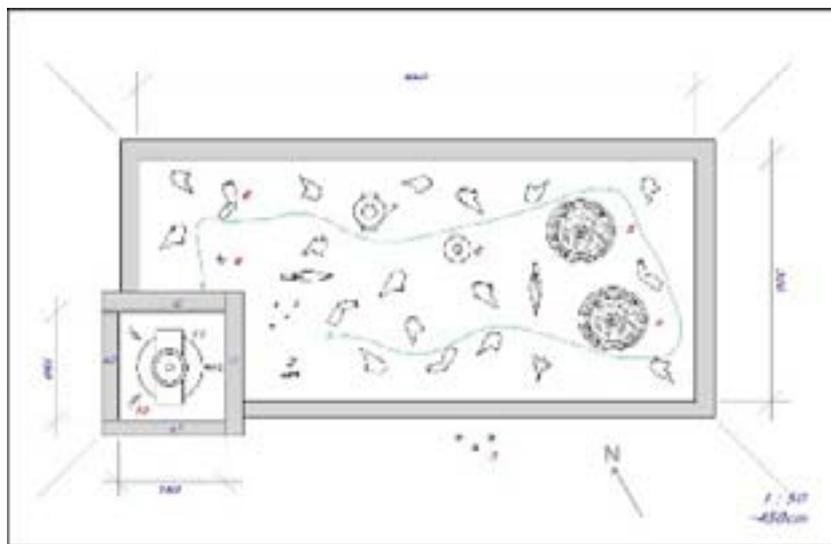


Fig. 6: Plan of the burial chamber under the Koreschnica burial mound. The krater was located in a small space in the south-west corner (11). It was surrounded by three bronze figures (10).

Egypt

There have been a number of significant returns to Egypt in recent years. Two major cases relate to objects that have been recorded and subsequently removed from Egypt: fragments from the tomb of Tetaki, and a mummy mask from Saqqara. Other examples of recently-surfaced Egyptian antiquities and a study of the market for Egyptian material will appear elsewhere (Gill in preparation).

Egypt and the Louvre

One of the key people to draw attention to the problem of looting is Zahi Hawass of the Supreme Council of Antiquities (SCA) in Egypt. In the autumn of 2009 Hawass decided to withdraw excavation permits from a team from the Louvre that was due to be working at Saqqara. Hawass had earlier requested the return of a series of wall-reliefs that had been acquired by the Louvre. Hawass resorted to other tactics when no co-operation was forthcoming (Schemm 2009). The reliefs had been acquired 'in good faith' by the Louvre in 2000 and 2003. It appears that at least one of them had surfaced at a London auction-house in the 1980s. Hawass claimed that the reliefs had been removed from the tomb of Tetaki (TT15) probably during the 1980s.

The Tomb of Tetaki in Thebes (TT 15) was investigated by Lord Carnarvon in 1908 (James 2001, 170-71). It belonged to one of the 18th Dynasty (New Kingdom) officials of Thebes who was alive during the reign of Ahmose (1550-1525 BCE). A photographic record was made at the time of the opening, but, as a result of thefts, Arthur Weigall, the then Chief Inspector, decided to close the tomb. Howard Carter, who had joined Carnarvon in 1909, helped to write up the tomb in *Five Years' Explorations at Thebes: a Record of Work Done 1907-1911* (Oxford 1912). The tomb was reopened in 1924 by Professor Percy Edward Newberry (who held the first chair of Egyptology at the University of Liverpool). A copy of the tomb paintings was made by N. de Garis Davies (Davies 1925). Further archaeological work on the tomb was conducted by Daniel Polz during the 1990s.

The Louvre quickly decided to return the fragments at the prompting of the French Minister of Culture, Frédéric Mitterand (press release of October 9, 2009).

The St Louis Art Museum and the mummy mask

Hawass has been taking an equally firm line with the St Louis Art Museum (SLAM) over its acquisition of an Egyptian mummy mask (Gay 2006; Gill 2009b, 45). The mask is known to have been excavated at Saqqara in 1952; it appears in photographs of the excavations. Hawass claims that the piece was looted from the Saqqara store during the late 1980s. SLAM curators claim that the information they received from the vendor, Phoenix Ancient Art, suggests that the mask was given to the excavator, Mohammed Zakaria Goneim (d. 1959), who then decided to sell it on the European market. In 1997 a Swiss national stated that the mummy mask was the same as the one he recalled seeing for sale in Brussels in 1952, 45 years earlier. The mask was acquired by Phoenix Ancient Art in 1997 and was placed on loan with the Musée d'art et d'histoire in Geneva before it was sold to SLAM in 1998 for \$499,000.

SLAM has stood by the collecting history that was supplied at the time of purchase.

Antiquities at auction

One of the key issues relates to the quantity of antiquities that appear on the market (Chippindale et al. 2001; see also Gill and Chippindale 2002). Revelations about the operations of the Antiquities department at Sotheby's in London brought about a transfer of antiquities sales to New York (Watson 1997; see also Gill 1997). Christie's and Sotheby's alone sold approximately \$296 million worth of antiquities between 1998 and 2009 (Fig. 7). This works out at approximately \$27 million average worth of sales annually for the two auction houses. This figure is in part distorted by the sale of the Guennol Lioness, said to have been found near Baghdad in Iraq, and for many years on display in the Brooklyn Museum (Porada 1950); it sold in 2007 for \$57 million.

One of the main components for the Sotheby's New York sales has been Egyptian antiquities, worth 21% in value (\$51 million) (Fig. 8). In three years (1998, 2003, 2008) this value has been in the 40% range, and as low as 6% in 2007 (the year of the Guennol Lioness). This amount may be compared with classical sculpture worth \$38 million, Athenian pottery \$7.6 million (Fig. 9), or Cycladic antiquities \$3.8 million. Approximately 65% of the Egyptian antiquities appear to be unrecorded before 1973, the date of the Archaeological Institute of America's 'Resolution on the Importation of Antiquities'. (1973 is the date used for statistical purposes as it can be assumed that museums, collectors and dealers will have been aware of the AIA Resolution.) Just over 95% of the Egyptian lots had no recorded find-spot. This compares with 63% of the Athenian pots being unrecorded before 1973; over 96% have no recorded find-spots.

The sample for Apulian pots over the same period is much smaller, just under 100 lots, and provides a figure of 60% of the pieces are unrecorded before 1973; all but one have an unrecorded find-spot. Elia had studied the collecting histories for Apulian pots at Sotheby's in the preceding period from 1960 to 1998 (Elia 2001). These latest figures shows a marked decrease in the number of Apulian pots offered at auction.

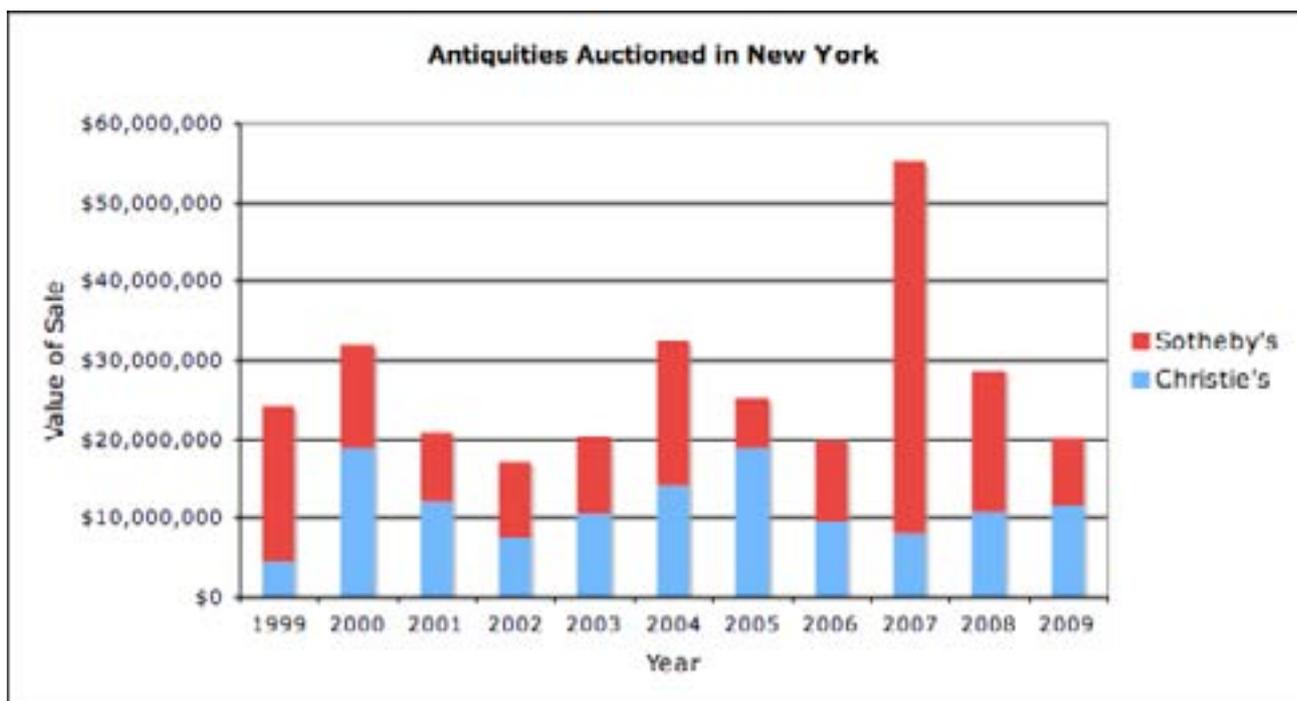


Fig. 7: Value of antiquities sold at Christie's and Sotheby's in New York.

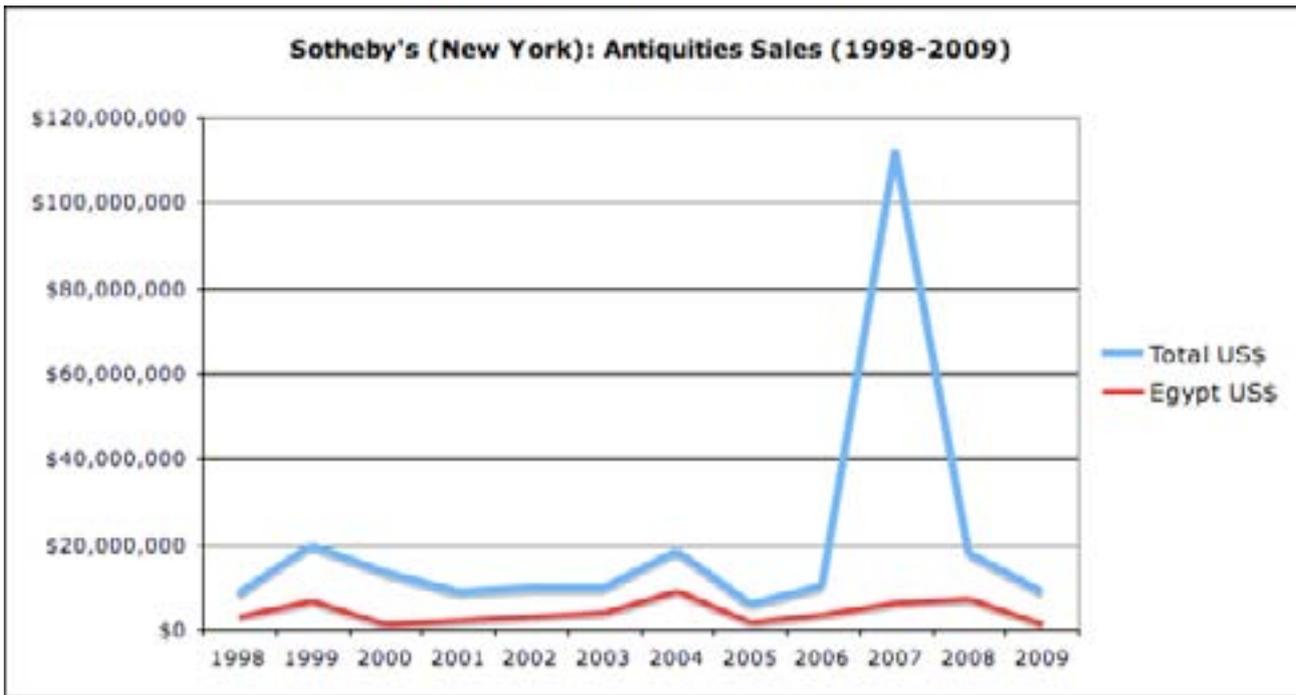


Fig. 8: Value of Egyptian antiquities against total for antiquities sold at Sotheby's, New York.

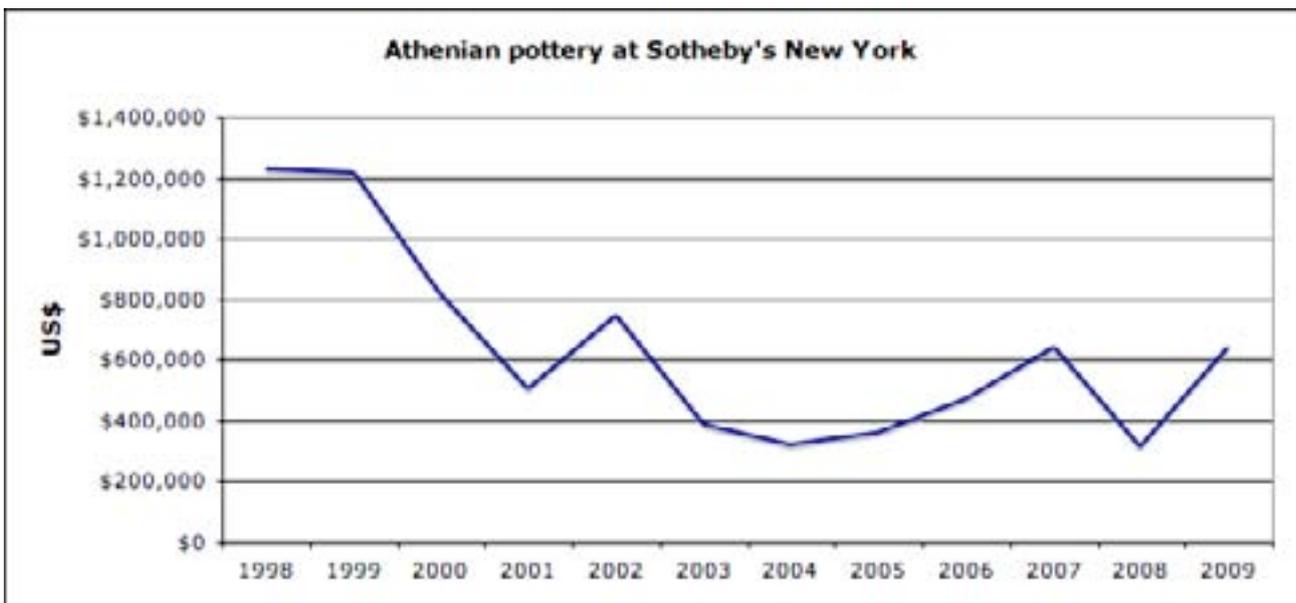


Fig. 9: The value of the sale of Athenian pottery at Sotheby's New York from 1998.

Museum Responses

In 1983 the US Congress implemented the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property. Such actions were not well received in the North American museum community. James Cuno responded to the implementation as follows:

These actions have been taken to enforce foreign nations' retentionist cultural policies at the expense of the Enlightenment principles on which public museums in the United States were established (Cuno 2005, 144; see also Cuno 2008).

Yet what Italian authorities and US legislators have been trying to do is reduce the level of looting sustained by archaeological sites in Italy. It has been argued that North American museums are merely safeguarding antiquities that have surfaced on the market.

But when an antiquity is offered to a museum for acquisition, the looting, if indeed there was any, has already occurred. Now the museum must decide whether to bring the object into its public collection, where it can be preserved, studied, and enjoyed, and where its whereabouts can be made widely known. Museums are havens for objects that are already, and for whatever reason, alienated from their original context (Cuno 2005, 155).

Yet at the same time it appears that there has been an extended supply chain leading back from the museums, to high profile dealers and galleries, to auction-houses, to middlemen and conservators in Switzerland, and then to the *tombaroli* in Italy (Perticarari and Giuntani 1986; Watson 1997; Watson and Todeschini 2006; Gill and Chippindale 2007b; see also Elia 1996).

Yet what would break the supply cycle that has led to the removal of thousands of Apulian pots from cemeteries? While the Apulian pots were offered for sale, collectors and museums continued to buy them. Only the threat that expensive acquisitions would have to be handed over, or an expensive legal case fought, seems to have reversed the position.

Museums and collectors have often said that they have made acquisitions that were both legal and 'in good faith' (see the revealing comments by Shelby White: Mead 2007). Yet since 1970 the UNESCO Convention has been a reminder of the issues, and the 1973 resolution by the Archaeological Institute of America brought the issue of looted antiquities firmly to archaeological and museological attention (Renfrew 2000). The returns from North American collections to Italy have been a clear reminder that 1970 (not 1983) is the obvious benchmark for deciding contentious acquisitions. The earliest acquisitions that have been returned to Italy were made in 1971 (Gill and Chippindale 2007a, 229, no. 25). Indeed a study of the acquisitions of South Italian pottery by a major North American museum after 1983 showed that the new climate did not stop recently-surfaced antiquities from being added to the collection (Gill and Chippindale 2008). It is also significant that 27% of the antiquities returned to Italy from North American collections were acquired in the 1990s, well after 1983.

The American Association of Museums (AAM) adopted 1970 as the benchmark date for the acquisition of antiquities (see Gill 2009b). In June 2008 the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD) adopted 1970 as the sensible date to use, in spite of opposition from key directors (Cuno 2008, 3, 24, 27, 36, 39, 43; see also de Montebello 2007, 36). The AAMD sponsored object registry also uses 1970 as a key date (Gill 2009b, 43). New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art, under its new director Tom Campbell, has adopted the 1970 date. The Collections Management Policy (adopted November 2008) states:

The Museum normally shall not acquire a work unless provenance research substantiates that the work was outside its country of prob-

able modern discovery before 1970 or was legally exported from its probable country of modern discovery after 1970.

Yet there are still areas that need tightening. While short-term loans for exhibitions seem to be covered by the AAMD's 'New guidelines on loans of antiquities and ancient art' (2006), the issue of long-term loans does not appear to be addressed. The high profile exhibition of antiquities from the Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman collection and the Shelby White and Leon Levy collection has been a reminder that such private collections can contain material that can give rise for legitimate concern (Bothmer 1990; Exhibition catalogue 1994; Chippindale and Gill 2000; see also Chippindale et al. 2001).

Conclusion

Museums curators, private collectors and archaeologists now recognise the material consequences of looting in order to provide material for the market. The substantial, high profile returns to Italy and to Greece have been a reminder that public museums, and even private collectors, can now be expected to adopt an ethical acquisition policy. It is not clear, however, that all dealers have yet to subscribe to this position. Indeed the impact of looting in the 1970s can be demonstrated by museums handing over acquired objects in the first decade of the 21st century.

Yet the largely unassessed issue relates to how far looting has damaged the ability of scholars to interpret and explain the extant material culture (Gill and Chippindale 1993). For example only 13% of Attic red-figured pots attributed to the Berlin painter come from 'a relatively secure archaeological context' (Gill 2003). Indeed well over 50% of the pots attributed to this painter have no known or secure archaeological context. And three pots attributed to this painter have been returned to Italy from North American collections: a hydria (formerly Boston, Museum of Fine Arts inv. 1978.45), a fragment from a calyx-krater (formerly Malibu, J. Paul Getty Museum inv. 77.AE.5 and related fragments, 82.AE.124, 84.AE.972, 84.AE.68, 87.AE.51), and an amphora (formerly New York inv. 1985.11.5; completed by small fragments given by Robert Guy). Contrast this lack of information with the comments made by Sir John Boardman in response to Lord Renfrew's observations on the Sarpedon krater:

... the interest of which is 98 per cent in its sheer existence (we know who made it, when and where) with only a 2 per cent loss in knowledge of what Etruscan grave it came from (Boardman 2006, 39).

The loss of contexts for a high percentage of pots attributed to a single Athenian pot-painter mean that we may fail to understand issues about distribution, use, value, and funerary display (see also Vickers and Gill 1994; Gill and Vickers 1995).

Yet as the governments of Egypt, Italy and Greece have strengthened their stand against looting, in part through the reclaiming of key pieces that have left their territories, so other countries have been targeted. This is particularly true for some of the former communist states in south-eastern Europe (Gill 2009a; see also Elkins 2008): Bulgaria and FYROM in particular have seen high levels of looting.

Alongside the debate over contemporary looting is a discussion over the return of cultural property that was removed from their countries of origin long before the 1970 UNESCO Convention. Should a unique set of architectural marbles be displayed in Bloomsbury or in

a specially constructed museum within line of sight of the Pericleian building upon which they were once display (Hitchens 2008)? Should the unique place of the Rosetta Stone in the history of Egyptology mean that it should be placed in the newly constructed Cairo Museum? Was the head of Nefertiti removed to Germany through some deception in the sharing of the finds? Such issues are separate to those that address the issues relating to the destruction of archaeological sites to supply the market with antiquities.

Yet linked to this issue are objects that were removed from the country in which they were found after the passing of local laws relating to antiquities, and prior to the 1970 UNESCO Convention. This would include material from the Lydian hoard that was returned to Turkey from New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art (Özgen and Öztürk 1996).

Is there still a need to discuss looting in classical lands? The announcement in January 2010 that the Italian police were searching for some 350 objects that had been in the possession of Fritz Bürki, best known as the conservator of the Sarpedon krater (see McNall 2003, 27), is a reminder of the continuing toxic legacy of looting since 1970.

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