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Looting

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astronomical observation at the site of Taosi. Others conclude that economic power was achieved by controlling some aspect of prestige good production and/or exchange (especially very thin-walled vessels and jade objects; most likely bronze vessel production was not mastered until later in time).

More research in individual regions will continue to illuminate important differences in the organization of settlements over time and the nature of polities that developed. More fieldwork also will provide more details about production and distribution of goods used on a daily basis such as utilitarian ceramics and stone tools. Similarly, there is increasing information about regional variation in the nature of subsistence economies (including millet and rice, animal husbandry involving pigs, cattle, etc.).

[See also China.]

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Anne P. Underhill

LOOTING

"Looting" (also known as "pot hunting") in the archaeological sense is the illegal excavation of archaeological sites and thefts from cultural institutions like museums without the permission of the relevant landowners, government entities, or museum authorities. Typically, looting is carried out in order to procure artifacts that often make their way into the legal marketplace. Looting is not limited to less-developed areas or to certain time periods or classifications of material, although there are sites and artifacts that have suffered from continued looting for generations. Egyptian legal documents provide evidence of looting as early as

1000 BC. These ancient papyri record the trials of robbers of the pharaohs' tombs. A poignant moment during the Egyptian uprising in the Arab Spring of 2011 was the crowd in Tahrir Square, Cairo, coming together to form a human chain to protect the antiquities housed in the National Museum from opportunistic thieves. Looting in Egypt has gone on for centuries, and the protestors in Tahrir recognized that their cultural heritage needed to be protected.

Looted artifacts, whether purchased legally or illegally, often end up embroiled fierce debates over "who owns the past." Recent successful campaigns by country like Turkey, Guatemala, and Italy have had the consequence of collectors' (both individuals and institutions) returning suspected artifacts. High-profile cases involving the Getty Museum, the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston, and consummate collectors Shelby White and Leon Levy have resulted in the reunification of the *Weary Hercules* statue and the trial of respected Getty curator Marion True. All undocumented excavation is often characterized as illicit looting, but there are some instances in which it is a legitimate activity and part of a legal trade in antiquities, such as in Native Corporations on St. Lawrence Island.

Looting is often part of the commodity chain that ultimately results in the legitimate sale of antiquities. Passing from the ground to middlemen and dealers, and then eventually to purchasers, objects go from being decontextualized artifacts to revered memorabilia or museum showpieces. Looting can be profitable to everyone in the chain, to a greater or lesser degree. Only rarely do looters come into direct contact with buyers. Typically, the object changes hands a number of times and passes through different borders (national and international) before finding its way into a private or public collection. Reports of looting come from all areas of the globe—in both economically deprived nations as well as market nations where the looting and the purchasing may occur within the same territorial boundaries. The recovery and sale of the scraps of parchment known as the Dead Sea Scrolls have been ongoing since the mid-1950s. The mystique

and intrigue involving the Scrolls—who wrote them, how to interpret them, and who should own them—has involved archaeologists, collectors, biblical institutions, museums, national governments across the globe. Originally the Dead Sea Scrolls were located as part of traditional activities (searching for antiquities) that the Bedouin have carried out for generations, but the reasons for looting are numerous. Typical and enduring rationales for looting include poverty, rural isolation, and lack of employment opportunities in legal industries, all of which contribute to the destruction of ancient sites.

Looting has been a traditional cultural activity carried out for generations by the same families and local networks. Sometimes these activities are organized, utilizing the latest technologies and tools. Metal detecting has been a popular hobby many parts of the world, so popular that some national legislative efforts to protect cultural heritages specifically address and regulate the use of metal detectors. In order to combat “nighthawking” (illegal metal-detecting carried out at night), archaeologists in the United Kingdom decided to join forces with detecting enthusiasts. The Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), a voluntary program established by the U.K. government, records the finds and associated information (the archaeological “findspot”) recovered by members of the public. Recent successes of the PAS have resulted in the recovery of the Crosby Garrett helmet—a brass Roman helmet dating to between the first and third centuries AD, sold at Christies’ for US\$3.6 million. The metal detectorist reported the find to the Finds Liaison Officer of the PAS, so much of the relevant archaeological information now accompanies the helmet. Proceeds of the sale were split between the landowner and the metal detectorist, as per U.K. law. What is yet unclear about the PAS is whether the services provided by the PAS, specifically valuation, have led to an increase in detecting.

Looting can also be a professional practice, a regular form of employment with adept practitioners, many of whom were inadvertently trained in archaeological methods while working as day

laborers on archaeological sites. In an exposé of professional looting in Peru, journalist Roger Atwood demonstrated that the Peruvian looters have experience in both locating sites and recognizing the most salable artifacts. Looters from all over demonstrate a keen awareness of the art market, indicating an understanding of the demand side of the trade. In the case of Peru, textiles are the best sellers; while in the Middle East, texts and inscriptions are in the greatest demand.

Recent reports from the American Southwest have linked looting to the use of methamphetamines (Patel, 2009). “Tweakers” (methamphetamine users) loot archaeological sites in order to recover artifacts, which are then sold on eBay or at trade shows, the proceeds of which are used to purchase drugs. The mind-altering effects of methamphetamines make it very easy for addicts to spend long days searching for artifacts. Law enforcement now refer to these looters as “Twiggers” (an amalgam of “tweakers” and “diggers”)—meth users who sell antiquities in order to buy drugs.

Most perceptions of looters (also known as *tombaroli* [Italian], *huaqueros* [Spanish], and *arkaiokapili* [Greek]) are of economically disadvantaged locals who are forced to loot archaeological sites and to steal from museums in order to feed their families. Termed “subsistence diggers,” an expression originally coined by archaeologist David Staley (1993) to describe human impacts to archaeological sites on St. Lawrence Island, these individuals are often excused for their illegal activities in light of the noble motives, but the result is the same—the theft of archaeological artifacts and the loss of knowledge. In the 1960s and 1970s, inhabitants of the Dead Sea Plain in Jordan, in dire straits due to drought, political unrest, and economic instability, turned to selling pots looted from Early Bronze Age cemeteries. The motivations for the current looting of those same sites, despite new and successful agricultural practices, may not be subsistence, but the carrying on of a tradition. It is difficult estimate the number of looters who would claim subsistence as a motivating factor in their practice.

Integration of technologies like Google Earth, satellite and aerial photography, and field reconnaissance have all assisted in the monitoring and assessment of archaeological site looting. Contreras and Brodie used publicly available images and Google Earth to identify cemetery sites and monitor looting activities using the "Historical Imagery" feature in Google Earth. The idea of using time-series imagery to monitor looting is not really new in itself, as Politis discussed much the same thing in 2002, as well as using aerial photographs at Ghor as-Safi in Jordan. Elizabeth Stone's much heralded work on mapping ongoing looting in Iraq since the first Gulf War in the early 1990s has provided stunning evidence of the scope of looting in Iraq during and after the 1990 Gulf War, and after the more recent invasion by Coalition forces in 2003. Using satellite imagery to assess looting in Iraq, Stone concluded that sites of all sizes and periods have been affected, although the focus of activity tended to favor larger sites and those dating to periods most likely to generate cylinder seals, cuneiform tablets, and, to a lesser extent, early coins, all of which are in high demand on the market.

The motivations for looting are myriad. And somewhat surprisingly, financial rewards are not always the trigger for looting, but market or no market, looting continues. Legislative efforts, which are often aimed at punishing looters through fines and imprisonment, are only as effective as their enforcement. And cultural heritage protection is not always (nor should it be) the highest priority for countries facing war, political unrest, and natural disasters. Efforts like the PAS and others, which include looters as an interested party in the trade in antiquities, may be a first step in working to protect the archaeological landscape.

[See also Cultural Resource Management; Global Issues; Dead Sea Scrolls; Destruction of the Past; Education in Archaeology; Popular Education; Ethics of Archaeology; Ethics of Collecting; Illicit Antiquities Trade; Museums and Collecting.]

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Morag M. Kersel

LOS MILLARES

Los Millares was a fortified Copper Age (ca. 3000 to 2200 BC) settlement and cemetery of megalithic tombs, defended by thirteen outpost forts, and located on a promontory in the Middle Andarax Valley, Almeria Province, southeast Spain. Excavations have been undertaken by Louis Siret (1892), Martin Almagro and Antonio Arribas (1953 to 1957), and Arribas and Fernando Molina (from 1978). Los Millares is the type-site for the local Copper Age culture (the Millaran). Its domestic and funerary architecture (concentric dry-stone walls with bastions and towers, dry stone walled passage graves