Acquittal for the Art Trade

A Press Release by the Interessengemeinschaft Deutscher Kunsthandel

After three years of research at a cost 1.2 million euros, the findings of the ILLICID study have now been published. The study set out to investigate illicit trafficking in cultural property in Germany, but did not actually find anything. The final reports contain no evidence at all of looting, the financing of terrorism or money laundering.

The ILLICID study prejudged the outcome of its research at its launch in 2015, when the project description claimed that revenues from the illegal trade in cultural property were an important mainstay of organized crime, alleging that there were links to drugs and arms trafficking, money laundering and the financing of terrorism. Three years later there is no longer any talk of this. Illegal excavations, looting and the financing of terrorism are not mentioned at all in the reports. And while money laundering cannot be entirely ruled out, says one report, there are no grounds to take it as a given.

The study concentrates on ancient art and artefacts from the Eastern Mediterranean, in other words that region that owing to the illegal excavation and looting of archaeological sites prompted the move to introduce new import and export restrictions for cultural property. If the existence of a major illegal market for such goods cannot be proven, then how much less likely it is to exist for other cultural artefacts such as paintings, antiques, books and such like, which also fall under Germany’s Cultural Property Protection Act and EU import regulations. The tight regulation of trade has thus lost its erstwhile justification and in retrospect turns out to have been unwarranted.

The starting point for the legislation was UNESCO’s estimate that the illegal trafficking of cultural property worldwide is a business worth 6 billion dollars a year. Trade associations, by contrast, estimate the aggregate annual sales of all serious antiquities dealers in Europe and the U.S. to amount to no more than 150–200 million dollars. The ILLICID study cites a figure for Germany of just 846,837 euros a year (1.69 million euros over two years), thus confirming that the claim of a trade worth billions is completely wide of the mark.

The study was able to identify 6,133 objects from the regions under scrutiny during the two-year investigation period. But since it did not confine itself to areas under threat and also extended to Greece and Egypt, for example, only 39.9 per cent of the objects could potentially come from Syria or Iraq. More than half of the objects concerned were being offered for sale in groups, which is a practice often preferred for extremely low-price items. According to the report, most of the single-item lots were Graeco-Roman and Egyptian artefacts. Once the valuable Greek vases, Roman glassware and Egyptian sculptures had been excluded, however, the total sales amounted to very little indeed. Hence it seems that low-price objects that were produced in large quantities account for most of what is leaving the areas under threat.

The study’s efforts to ascertain the provenance of the pieces confirm the constant warnings of the trade regarding the impracticality of the Cultural Property Protection Act’s demand for proof of provenance. A provenance prior to the cut-off dates stipulated by the Cultural Property Protection Act could be supplied for only 2.1 per cent of the objects. This has to do with the fact that many objects had been in Europe for decades and were not exported just recently from the areas under threat. It follows that they could not possibly have the kind of current export licence required by the law. Their provenance was instead ascertained on the basis of old auction catalogues, inventories and lending lists as well as collection catalogues. This recourse to information published by the art trade shows that auction houses and dealers in ancient art make an important contribution to provenance research and are not the source of obfuscation being sought here.

Readers of the report search in vain for any concrete pointers to the kind of dubious players, trade networks and channels or revenue and money laundering that the pilot study set out to uncover, simply because no such evidence was found. The study is thus an acquittal for the trade!

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1 The reports (in German) can be accessed at tiheu by entering the keyword ILLICID: a) Verhundename: Illegaler Handel mit Kulturgut in Deutschland. Verfahren zur Erhebung des Dunkelfeldes als Grundlage zur Kriminalitätsbekämpfung und – prävention am Beispiel antiker Kulturgüter, Akronym: ILLICID; Teilvorhaben (TV3): Antike Kulturgüter aus dem östlichen Mittelmeerraum: Identifizierung, Klassifizierung und Dokumentation von in Deutschland gehandelten Objekten: Schlussbericht zu Nr. 3.2, BNNest-BMBF 98. b) Abschlussbericht zum Projekt ILLICID; Teilvorhaben eFIT Werkzeuges.

This image with the caption "Cultural goods are a sought-after commodity" was used to illustrate the project outline of the ILLICID study published by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. The choice of image is rather unusual, as the photograph shows the museum storage area on the Forum of Pompeii, a well-protected archaeological site. The caption, however, seems to suggest that we are looking at a “self-service store” for the trade. As important as unusual, as the photograph shows the museum storage area on the Forum of Pompeii, a well-protected archaeological site. The caption, however, seems to suggest that we are looking at a “self-service store” for the trade. As important as unusual, as the photograph shows the museum storage area on the Forum of Pompeii, a well-protected archaeological site.
Missing!

Lost Sculptures from the Eshmun Sanctuary near Sidon (Lebanon)

By Rolf A. Stucky and Jean-David Cahn

Museums, art dealers and collectors alike have a profound appreciation for our cultural heritage and are committed to protecting and preserving it. The past decades have seen the development of numerous instruments to ensure that collecting and trading in works of art is in line with these ethical principles. These include, amongst other things, the practice of having works of art offered for sale checked by the Art Loss Register and/or screened against Interpol’s database of stolen works of art. This is important as attempts are repeatedly made to introduce stolen art works into the legitimate art market.

However regrettable such incidents may be, they can also be seen as an opportunity, because if the parties involved react correctly, they may bring about the restitution of the artworks to their rightful owners. A prerequisite for this is that it should be generally known which objects are missing. The conversation between Prof. Dr. Rolf A. Stucky and Jean-David Cahn on the restitution of sculptures from the Eshmun Sanctuary near Sidon (CQ 3/2019, pp. 4-6), however, showed clearly that information about missing works of art is often difficult to access.

For this reason we have, with the permission of the Lebanese Directorate General of Antiquities, decided to publish the following pages illustrating sculptures and reliefs from the Eshmun Sanctuary that disappeared during the Lebanese Civil War (1973-1990) and have remained untraced since then. It is the first time that such a joint endeavour between a government authority and the trade has taken place and we hope that this proactive approach will set a new trend.

Contact
Should you be aware of the location of any of the sculptures illustrated here, you are kindly requested to contact one of the following persons or institutions:
Sarkis el-Khoury, Director-General of Antiquities of Lebanon, Beirut: sarkis.khoury@dga.culture.gov.lb
Hind Younes, Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon, Beirut: hind.younes@dga.culture.gov.lb
Directorate General of Antiquities of Lebanon, Beirut: info@dga.culture.gov.lb
Prof. Dr. Rolf A. Stucky, Emeritus, Department of Classical Archaeology, University of Basel: rolf-a.stucky@unibas.ch

Simply return them?

Taking the Eshmun Sanctuary in Lebanon as their starting point, Prof. Dr. Rolf A. Stucky und Jean-David Cahn discuss the difficulties encountered in the quest to identify and return stolen works of art.

**JDC:** Dear Rolf, for decades the problems surrounding the restitution of stolen and looted art have made emotions run high. The recent wave of polemic unleashed by the French president’s promise to return African cultural treasures currently in French museum collections – I commented on this in the Editorial of CQ 2/2019 – reveals that the issue has lost none of its relevance. While most people tend to focus on which objects should be returned, for a change I would like to take a closer look at how the process of restitution actually works. As an art dealer, I have noticed time and again that many people have no idea how complex and difficult it is to return objects to their rightful owners once it has been ascertained that they were stolen.

**RAS:** That is indeed true. It can take years from the moment somebody realises that he or she is looking at a stolen work of art until it is returned. Even in a clear-cut case such as the restitution of the marble bull’s head from the Classical Eshmun Temple near Sidon which was stolen in 1981 during the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990), lengthy legal proceedings were necessary: In January 2017 Thomas Campbell, then director of The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, officially informed Sarkis el-Khoury, Directeur Général des Antiquités of Lebanon, that the museum had been given this sculpture on loan. Although the object was well documented and there was not the slightest doubt that the Lebanese state was the rightful owner, the collectors argued that they had bought the artifact in good faith in 1996. As good faith has a relatively high standing in the USA, we were faced with significant difficulties. Complex legal proceedings ensued, which were finally decided in favour of the Lebanese state. As a result, the restitution of the bull’s head as well as that of four other sculptures was finally celebrated in the National Museum of Beirut in February 2018.†

**JDC:** Your example shows clearly that in restitution issues different legal principles can clash. In the case in question, the good faith of the collector who acquired the stolen artwork conflicts with the right of the legal owner to have his property returned. A further complicating factor is the lack of communication - above all the lack of timely communication - as well as different legal systems. The goodwill, sometimes of several parties, is often, as unbelievable as it sounds, insufficient to effect the restitution of objects, as the bureaucratic hurdles are overwhelmingly high.

The length and complexity of administrative formalities also hamper the implementation of efficient measures to protect cultural property in areas of crisis. Article 14 of the Swiss Cultural Property Transfer Act (CPTA), which came into force in 2005, provides that financial assistance can be granted to museums or similar institutions in Switzerland for the temporary fiduciary custody and conservatory care of cultural property that is part of the cultural heritage of another state and is in jeopardy in that state due to exceptional events. This is, of course, a very welcome measure. However, this financial assistance can only be granted if the fiduciary custody is consented to by the official agency responsible for culture in the other country or occurs under the auspices of UNESCO or another international organization for the protection of cultural property. To speak plainly, this means that the state in question, say for instance Syria, has to admit that it has lost control over certain areas, and naturally it will not do so. As a result, we here in Switzerland possess the technical infrastructure to temporarily store jeopardised movable cultural heritage, but cannot use it, as the requisite applications are not submitted. This is, in my opinion, a lamentable structural deficit of the CPTA.

If – for whatever reasons – it is not possible to protect the cultural heritage in an area of crisis, it is all the more important that information on the jeopardised objects be made available to authorities, archaeologists, art dealers and collectors. This is the only way these cultural goods, should worst come to worst, can be identified as stolen or looted. I know of several cases in which archaeologists responsible for a project in a region that was later affected by violent conflict were in possession of extensive documentation on jeopardised or looted cultural goods. They could not, however, make these public for various reasons such as exclusive publication rights. This is patently absurd! In an emergency, archaeologists should have the right to pass on such information to third parties without having to request permission. This would be an important preventive measure, making it possible to identify the objects should they, many years later, surface on
the art market. This is, after all a prerequisite for their restitution!

RAS: Indeed, I myself experienced exactly the situation that you describe. I lived in Lebanon from 1970 to 1972 and worked at the French Archaeological Institute. During this period and also in the following years, until 1974, I regularly visited the excavations headed by Maurice Dunand in the Eshmun Sanctuary. Many archaeologists find it more exciting to continue their fieldwork than to sit in the library and publish their excavations. Thus, I was entrusted with the archaeological legacy of Maurice Dunand. Excavation work was stopped only in 1978, three years after the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War. I intended to wait with the excavation publication until after the end of the war in order to be able to make new photographs of the artefacts. In addition, many details required checking. However, I would have put my life at risk, had I travelled to Lebanon at the time.

But then, in 1991, four sculptures which evidently came from the Eshmun Sanctuary were offered for sale in Zurich. Legal proceedings ensued and in the end the artworks could be returned to Lebanon. This incident brought home to me that I had to publish all the sculptures of which I had a photograph and an inventory entry as quickly as possible. One needs both elements, the photograph and the inventory entry, in order to prove that an artefact comes from a certain excavation. Although there is a law that all objects found in Lebanon should be published first in a Lebanese journal, the civil war left me with no choice – I had to disregard the law. At your suggestion, dear David, I also forwarded all object descriptions and photographs to the Art Loss Register.

When I returned to Lebanon in 1996 for the first time since the end of the civil war, I discovered that of the 660 inventoried sculptures from the Eshmun Sanctuary, only twelve were left, all pieces without market value. So far, we have succeeded in effecting the restitution of about twenty stolen sculptures, but about a hundred pieces are still missing!

JDC: Could it be that much has disappeared locally? For example, there are persistent rumours that works of ancient art were seen to be in the possession of a certain, very powerful local family.

RAS: That is certainly possible. The excavator’s photographs which I published in 1993 show that there were also less significant fragments – little hands and feet which could at most serve as paperweights. So maybe some things were not “exported”. But the objects that did leave the country were the important, expensive artworks. There can be no doubt that the parties to the civil war trafficked ancient art according to the principle: “art for weapons”.

In a second step, in 2005, three colleagues from Basel and I published the architecture along with the Egyptian, Phoenician and Greek inscriptions of the Eshmun Sanctuary. Evidently came from the Eshmun Sanctuary. Many archaeologists find it more exciting to continue their fieldwork than to sit in the library and publish their excavations. Thus, I was entrusted with the archaeological legacy of Maurice Dunand. Excavation work was stopped only in 1978, three years after the outbreak of the Lebanese Civil War. I intended to wait with the excavation publication until after the end of the war in order to be able to make new photographs of the artefacts. In addition, many details required checking. However, I would have put my life at risk, had I travelled to Lebanon at the time.

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ously from Syria - stylistically, these works are easily recognisable – and lacks a sound provenance is not tradeable. The market for artworks from war zones has collapsed completely. This does not mean that this type of art is not collected, but the pre-conditions are absolutely clear: The artefacts must have solid documentation. The market is very sensitive to such crisis situations, because it is the nightmare of any trader to unintentionally acquire such piece. It is remarkable how little is generally known about how the art trade works! Few people realize that in Europe the sale of an ancient work of art is subject to multiple regulatory controls. There is no European country in which cultural goods are not subject to import and export regulations. In addition, there is robust self-control by the trade itself, which includes the mandatory verification of objects in theft archives such as the Art Loss Register or Interpol.

RAS: Of course, I agree with you. Sculptures from Palmyra and Jordanian mosaics are relatively easy to recognize. Nonetheless, the problem of the excavation licenses sold by IS remains. These concern material of the 3rd and 2nd millennium B.C. from the Euphrates region – the left bank of the river up to the Turkish and Iraqi border.

JDC: Near Eastern art is easily recognizable, even if it requires specialized knowledge to identify the exact geographic location from which a piece comes. Every reputable dealer, if he works carefully, will exercise extreme caution with items from the Euphrates area. Nothing can be traded from this region without written documentation predating 1991. This is almost equivalent to a trade ban and the market for these artefacts has largely collapsed, at least in Europe and the USA. At major art fairs, the Vetting Committee closely scrutinises items from the Near East and adequate documentation must be presented. In the past 20-30 years, the art trade in the West has developed very effective due diligence measures and artefacts without an impeccable provenance have no commercial future. Accordingly, very few objects from these war zones have appeared in Europe. But that does not mean that we know what is happening on in the Asian, Russian or Arab markets.

The antiquities trade, especially in Europe, but also in North America, has made significant progress with regard to due diligence matters. On the other hand, I think there is a substantial deficit in the field of art crime prevention. It would make sense to pre-register the artefacts located in threatened areas with the Art Loss Register or Interpol well in advance of a possible or expected catastrophe. This would have a deterrent effect, as these objects would be recognizable. Furthermore, an instrument for their detection would already be in place, should they nonetheless be looted. Of course, this assumes that the objects are documented, but unfortunately that is far from always the case.

RAS: Exactly this topic was discussed by speakers from Syria and Palestine at the 9th International Congress on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East, which was held in Basel in 2014.4 There is increased awareness of the necessity to document museum and excavation collections with photographs and exact descriptions and to disseminate this information both in print and digital formats. Furthermore, the ICOM Object ID project launched in 1997. This is an international standard used for describing cultural objects, facilitating the identification of archaeological, cultural and artistic objects in case of loss or theft.5 It is much to be hoped that funds are made available, especially in politically unstable countries, permitting them to adequately document their cultural heritage.

JDC: Dear Rolf, here I can only agree with you. Thank you for your time.

Jean-David Cahn is a fourth-generation art dealer. He studied Classical Archaeology in Basel and Oxford.

Rolf A. Stucky was professor of Classical Archaeology at the University of Basel from 1978-2007.

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Fake News and the Antiquities Trade

By Ivan Macquisten

The newly minted European Union import licensing regulations, prompted by the desire to prevent trafficked items that could have funded terrorism from entering the EU, used commonly quoted false figures to justify the proposals, as the Impact Assessment (IA) and Fact Sheet published by the European Commission to explain their purpose demonstrate. This matters because, as IADAA (International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art) and others have argued in their submissions to the EU, Article 4 and other aspects of the proposals are likely to have a severely restrictive and unreasonable impact on the antiquities trade. The levels of proof required to qualify for an import licence, as set out in the draft proposal, are simply not available in the case of most relevant objects.

This article will look at how these false figures have come to blight the market over the years as a result of what the wider world now recognizes as the phenomenon of fake news. This became the subject of much debate from the beginning of the Trump administration, but it was a phenomenon in the art market some time before that. In 2013, for example, headlines appeared across the media that 40 per cent of antiques in the UK market were fake. The source was given as The UK Fakes and Forgeries Report. However, it transpired that journalists had only seen a press release, and this merely stated that 43 per cent of people who buy antiques do not get them authenticated, while 68 per cent of people who buy antiques were ‘worried’ that they might be fake. The true purpose of the release and report, though, was to promote a new television series, Treasure Detectives. On being pressed for a copy of the original survey, a spokesman for the television company replied: “I’m afraid we don’t release the survey data,” before going on to disclose that the survey had been completed by 2000 adults, using a reputable survey company (never named), and adding, “The rest of the report was comment and expertise of Curtis Dowling,” the programme’s presenter, who gained substantial publicity from the story.

It is now commonplace for the media to quote misinformation from such ‘surveys’ or ‘reports’ whose real objective is to promote a commercial or political interest. In July 2015, a Google search of the word ‘Survey’ at Antiques Trade Gazette yielded 79.9 million results; in June 2017 that figure had risen to 515 million; today it is 1.84 billion. As 24-hour rolling reporting, combined with declining resources within the media, rob journalists of the opportunity to investigate in any depth or check facts, they become increasingly vulnerable to unscrupulous interests that want to present propaganda or marketing as news. According to Robert McChesney and John Nichols in their book The Death and Life of American Journalism, by 2010 there were five PR specialists for every journalist, compared to 1:3 in 2004. By September 2018, industry source Muck Rack put it at 6:1. The pressure on journalists can also lead to simple errors, while the internet has made us all publishers, but not with the accompanying rigour required for proper fact checking, so that even accurate media reports end up being misquoted. Fake news is endemic where campaigners pursue policy change in highly sensitive areas. The antiquities trade is a natural target, and much evidence exists of how potentially damaging new laws emerge as a result.

![Fig. 1: The Deloitte report for the European Commission (see fn. 6) includes this table on page 120, showing no evidence of the financing of terrorist activities from cultural property trafficking within the EU.](image1)

![Fig. 2: The Work of Art Crime home page on the Interpol website, where it makes a clear claim about the black market in works of art. Screenshot taken on February 11, 2019. The statement was removed in March 2019. The World Customs Organisation’s Illicit Trade Report 2017 (see fn. 8) demonstrates clearly that this claim is wrong (cf. fn. 8).](image2)
As part of the research process in drawing up its import licensing proposals, the European Commission ordered a study from Deloitte to investigate, amongst other things, how antiques trafficking within the EU might be financing terrorism. On page 120, the report concluded that hard evidence for the existence of various criminal effects that “are believed to occur as the result of trafficking in cultural goods” was “currently often lacking.” The table on the same page shows that, to a limited extent, evidence linking the trafficking of cultural goods to corruption, organised crime, money laundering and the destruction of cultural goods was available. However, the section titled Financing Terrorist Activities registered zero on the scale (fig. 1).

Nonetheless, the European Commission ignored this and pressed ahead with its import licensing proposals anyway, providing the Impact Assessment (IA) and Fact Sheet quoting sources to illustrate the problem. As noted above, though, when checked, these sources proved inaccurate or untraceable – and decades old. For example, on page 12, the IA states: “According to studies, the total financial value of the illegal antiques and art trade is larger than any other area of international crime except arms trafficking and narcotics trafficking, the IA gives as its source a 1995 article by Lisa J. Borodkin in the Columbia Law Review: That article, in turn, gives as its source the June 13, 1992 (page 13) Guardian article The Greed That Is Tearing History Out By Its Roots: The Illicit International Traffic in Antiquities Rivals the Drugs and Arms Trades in the Catalogue of World Crime by Deborah Pugh et al. However, Pugh’s article simply quotes it as the ‘belief’ of Patrick Boylan, then Professor of Creative Practice and Enterprise at City University in London. It provides no hard evidence for the claim, and that article is now 27 years old.

What we do know now, thanks to the World Customs Organisation’s latest illicit trade report, is that cultural heritage trafficking – including all art and antiques from around the world, not just antiquities – is so tiny compared with drugs, weapons, environmental products, medical products, counterfeit goods, alcohol and tobacco, that it barely registers in the figures. The summary of statistics and pie charts provided by IADAA, which can be checked against the original report, gives a clear view of this (fig. 4). The IA gives as its source for the second, “$3 to $6 billion yearly” claim the same page of the Columbia Law Review article by Lisa J. Borodkin. As Borodkin’s footnote 5 indicates, her source for this figure was an August 19-20, 1993 article by Lachlan Carmichael and Mohamed El-Dakhakhny of Agence France Presse entitled Thieves Plunder Egypt’s Tombs, Dealers Sell Treasures Worldwide, which quotes the figure as the opinion of Caroline Wakeford, then operations manager for the Art Loss Register, who appears to be quoting another unnamed source. So this is another unattributed primary source from another media article that is now more than 25 years old.

Also cited in the same set of footnotes in the IA is Neil Brodie, Jenny Doole and Peter Watson’s 2000 report, Stealing History: The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material, which does quote a similar figure. On page 23, it states: “Geraldine Norman has estimated that the illicit trade in antiquities, world-wide, may be as much as $2 billion a year.” On page 60, under the relevant footnote, it gives the source as follows: Norman G., Great Sale of the Century. Independent, November 24, 1990. However, the Norman article mentions no figure whatsoever. UNESCO quotes the Brodie, Doole and Watson report in its 2011 report, The fight against the illicit trafficking of cultural objects, which in turn is quoted by the European Commission Fact Sheet in its attempt to justify the proposals. But UNESCO makes exactly the same mistake as Brodie, Doole and Watson did in quoting the Norman article, referring to it as Great Sale of the Century rather than Great Sale of the Centuries, indicating that it lifted the source without checking it. Had it done so, as explained above, it would have found that the article quoted no figure at all. These are just some of the figures commonly referred to in the media that contribute to the fake news phenomenon relating to the antiques market that influence policymakers in the EU, the UK and the US.

On February 20, 2019, the BBC World Service Business Daily radio programme Zombie Statistics challenged UNESCO over the inaccuracy of its data. Far from defending UNESCO’s figures, Lazare Eloundu Assomo, Director of Culture In Emergencies, argued that they do not matter as they are out of date (although they were never accurate and UNESCO continues to publish them). Dr Tim Harford, presenter of the Radio Four statistics and fake news programme More or Less, was
Further risk category comparisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84,255</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>40,236 (47.7%)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeit goods</td>
<td>20,058 (23.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol &amp; Tobacco</td>
<td>12,228 (14.5%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical products</td>
<td>6,051 (7.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weapons &amp; Ammunition</td>
<td>3,232 (3.8%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental products</td>
<td>2,310 (2.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>140 (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Number of seizures</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>101,024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>43,144 (42.7%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counterfeit goods</td>
<td>27,267 (27.0%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Alcohol &amp; Tobacco</td>
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<td>Medical products</td>
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<tr>
<td>Weapons &amp; Ammunition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental products</td>
<td>2,419 (2.4%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural Heritage</td>
<td>167 (0.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As this article goes to press, it has emerged that some of the same false claims that informed the European Commission over the import licensing regulations have now been used to justify new proposals for an EU-wide harmonisation of restitution regulations for looted art. Whether or not there is a need for new laws, these proposals should not be based on falsehoods.

Sources for the data shown can be found on the following pages of the WCO Illicit Trade Report 2017 as follows:

Cultural Heritage: 7, 9, 16; Drugs: 33, 34, 36, 88, 89; Environmental Products: 92, 93; Counterfeit Goods: 117; Medical Products: 117; Alcohol and Tobacco: 147; Weapons and Ammunition: 181.


Ivan Macquisten is a journalist and art market analyst. As Editor of Antiques Trade Gazette for 15 years, he oversaw the entire news and features operation. He is a leading commentator and opinion former on the international art market and has niche specialist interests in art market business operations, risk and statistical analysis. He is the researcher, policy and media adviser to a number of trade associations including IADAA.
The Debate

Plaster Casts and Photography: Contrary or Complementary?

By Tomas Lochman

In his excellent article for CQ 4/2018, Detlev Kreikenbom reviewed the important role played by photography in the way ancient sculpture is studied and shared and how it has developed over the years. The author’s conclusion, that an image “can never be a valid substitute for the original – but sometimes it is more beautiful”, echoes the words of Jacob Burckhardt, for whom the then relatively new medium of photography became an indispensable tool. It also addresses what is at the heart of the relationship between photography and sculpture, which strictly speaking rests on a contradiction. For while a two-dimensional visual medium can never really do justice to a work of art that was created in the round and is best appreciated in the round, the fact is that it was photography’s capacity to simplify ancient sculpture that made it an object of scientific study in the first place. By collapsing a three-dimensional object into a flat, two-dimensional image, it not only enabled others to share highly complex monuments, but it also made those monuments easier to read, or if you will, “more beautiful”.

To fully understand a three-dimensional work of art, however, the viewer must be able to contemplate it not just from one vantage point, but from as many different angles as possible. Such scrutiny, alas, is afforded only those who have access to the original – or to a plaster cast, since a cast can certainly substitute for the original with respect to plasticity, scale and spatial impact. All the major sculpture experts of the second half of the nineteenth century were aware of this crucial advantage, which is why so many universities all over the German-speaking world began amassing their own collections of plaster casts at around that time. Meanwhile, the still nascent medium of photography was increasingly being placed in the service of archaeological research. It was precisely the contrariness of these two media, the plaster cast and photography, that made them so perfectly complementary for the study of sculpture. Casts facilitated further investigation and practical experiments, while photographs provided a powerful means of communicating the findings obtained.

Among the scholars to apply a method that combined the two was the German archaeologist Reinhard Kekulé von Stradonitz (1839–1911), the scion of a Bohemian noble family. He backed up his studies of original sculptures with photographs of plaster casts which in the interests of objectivity he had photographed under identical conditions (figs. 1, 3). Especially interesting is his essay of 1867 in which he published a head replica of the Apollo Belvedere that the Karlsruhe sculptor Carl Steinhäuser had discovered in a stonemason’s workshop in Rome just the previous year (along with two other Roman head replicas of well-known Greek masterpieces: the Farnese Hercules by Lysippus and the Discobolos of Myron). Steinhäuser himself had already spotted the affinity between his head of Apollo and that of the Belvedere statue. He had even furnished the head with a bust, added a nose and restored other minor losses, using the Apollo Belvedere as his model. He also made plaster casts documenting both the original and the restored state, which Kekulé then proceeded to compare. His first comparison was between the cast of the restored bust and a cast of the Vatican Apollo, the photographs of which, taken from exactly the same angle and with an identical fall of light, allowed him to point out the similarities. In a later essay, he went a stage further, this time comparing a cast of the unrestored head and a cast of the head of the Belvedere statue, from which he had first had all those parts that were missing from Steinhäusser’s head cut away. The comparison facilitated by this process of adapting the casts to make them resemble each other as closely as possible and then photographing them under the same conditions is remarkable (fig. 1). By exploiting to the full the advantages of a plaster cast as well as the possibilities of photography, Kekulé was able to prove that Steinhäusser’s head really was another replica of the Apollo Belvedere.

That the Antiquarische Gesellschaft Basel was able to acquire this head of Apollo together with Steinhäuser’s two other heads in Rome in 1868 was an extraordinary stroke
of good fortune, incidentally, especially as it snapped them up just days before the arrival of the representatives of the Königliche Museen in Berlin, who had also been eyeing them. The three heads have been at the core of the Basler Antikensammlung and the great pride of the Antikenmuseum since 1966. The restorations undertaken by Steinhäuser were not removed until 1924 (fig. 2).

Kekulé’s research on the unrestored cast provides vivid proof of the felicitous synergies that were sparked by archaeology’s two most important media, photography and the plaster cast, in the days before photography became so easy that it increasingly took precedence over the latter. It was not until the 1960s and 1970s, when Ernst Berger with his pioneering reconstructions in Basel’s Skulpturhalle (naturally supported by extensive photographic documentation) reminded us of the advantages of plaster casts, that they were at last restored to their former importance and glory.

Further reading:

When I first saw this monumental royal portrait – a splendid sculpture in double life-size – I was immediately captivated by it. The oval face with its smooth, taut flesh appears ageless, and the calm facial features are imbued with serene majesty. Detached and inscrutable, this idealised head reaches beyond the distinction between male and female: depending on which part of the face one focuses on it seems at times more masculine, at times more feminine, a strange phenomenon that is also encountered in other portraits of the Ptolemies. Intriguingly, despite its high degree of idealisation, the sculpture conveys a distinct impression of individuality. The relatively close-set eyes framed by heavy lids, the small mouth with soft, sensual lips and the broad, almost fleshy transition from the chin to the neck tell us unequivocally that here, a specific person is represented. Indeed, there are close physiognomic similarities between our head and the two portraits in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, Copenhagen, inv. no. 573, and in the Louvre, Paris, inv. no. 3030, which were identified as Ptolemy III Euergetes (ca. 284-222 B.C.) by Helmut Kyrieleis, the distinguished specialist on Ptolemaic sculpture. Two large dowel holes and holes for pins indicate that the royal portrait once wore an elaborate coiffure and headdress, possibly a crown of Helios or a vulture cap. Due to the high quality of its workmanship, there can be no doubt that it was made by a Greek sculptor active in Egypt.

It is a rare stroke of luck that the family which owned this portrait from 1946 onwards kept the sales contract. It is reproduced on the page opposite with excerpts in translation. The head has been in the USA since 1948 and the original customs and shipping documents have also been preserved.
wound round her head and her hair gathered up in a bun at the nape of her neck. The classical stylistic idiom is also evident in the shape of the eyes with pronounced pupils and the heavy, rounded chin. Four dolphins swimming clockwise frame the head.

On this coin, Syracuse presents itself with great self-confidence: The quadriga alludes to its foundation myth, according to which the Corinthian settlers were accompanied by a priest of Zeus from Olympia, and the Nike is reminiscent of an aristocratic victory in chariot racing. The ketos is interpreted by scholars as a symbol of Syracusan naval supremacy after the victory of the tyrant Hieron over the Etruscans at Cyme (474 B.C.). The personification of the Fountain of Arethusa on the off-shore island of Ortygia provides a local reference. The dolphins, Apollo’s companions at sea, symbolise the safe harbours of Syracuse and the inscription "ΣΥΡΑΚΟΣΙ-ΟΝ" proudly refers to its citizens. This was to change in the Hellenistic period, as will be discussed in the next issue.

The second coin presented here is a didrachm issued in 350–330 B.C. by the city of Metapontum on the Gulf of Taranto (figs. 3-4). The obverse refers to the city’s foundation myth: The inscription “ΑΕΥΚΗΠΙΠ(ΟΣ)” identifies the bearded man with tilted-back Corinthian helmet as Leucippus, the leader of the Achaeans, who, when the colony was founded in ca. 680 B.C., tricked their Tarentine neighbours into giving them the land required (Strabo, Geography 6, 264). On the reverse the grains and fine awns of an ear of barley are naturalistically rendered. A dove ascends from the barley leaf on the right. The inscription “ΑΜΙ” below it names the city magistrate responsible for the coin issue and the inscription “ΜΕΤΑ” on the left is an abbreviated reference to the citizens. The barley ear was a regular feature on the coins of Metapontum during the 6th-3rd centuries B.C. and symbolised the cultivation of cereals in the fertile chôra that was of vital importance to the polis. As the goodwill of the fertility goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone was essential, coins depicting these deities, such as the stater (430–400 B.C.) illustrated on p. 6, formed a second important group amongst the coins minted in Metapontum.

The Debate

“... but more beautiful in a photograph.”

Photographs of Ancient Sculptures since the 19th Century

By Detlev Kreikenbom

“... but more beautiful in a photograph,” the cultural historian Jacob Burckhardt of Basel (1818–1897) remarked, almost as an afterthought, of the sculpture in the Vatican Museums that he had just described. In his opinion the statue depicting a nymph with a shell was beautiful in its own right, but was nonetheless surpassed in beauty by its image.

Burckhardt was a passionate collector of visual representations of architecture, sculptures and paintings, both ancient and modern. The core of his collection was composed of engravings and etchings, which, in the course of time, he supplemented with photographs. Burckhardt held this new pictorial medium in high esteem. He appreciated that photography had a potential for visual fidelity that far surpassed the possibilities of traditional graphic media, although he was also keenly aware of the fact – more so than many of his contemporaries – that a photograph could never be purely objective.

A wide range of prints from glass plate negatives could be purchased even in those days. Professional photographers such as Anderson, Brogi, Sommer and especially the Alinari brothers made the documentation of archaeological objects a part of their photographic projects. They all sought to “objectivise” the art works by placing them before a neutral, mostly black background, thereby eliminating any references to the objects’ context (fig. 3). Sculptures were photographed using a uniform mode of lighting which sought to render all the details clearly. This, in combination with long exposure times, enabled the photographers to create images whose precision often remains unsurpassed to this day.

Fig. 1: A portrait, so-called Marius. Munich, Glyptothek. Photo: Ilse Schneider-Lengyel
The appearance, in the late 19th century, of photographic compendia of ancient sculptures with a claim to archaeological and scholarly precision did nothing to change the maxims governing the presentation of the objects. The background remained neutral and the painstakingly made photographs continued to be accurate in every detail. It was not until around 1930 that a reaction against these images set in as they came to be regarded as too prosaic or cold. Writing in 1929, the archaeologist Ernst Langlotz criticised a sculpture that was depicted with reinforced contour in front of a uniform black background as an “incorporeal silhouette.” The demand was voiced that photographs should reflect the original positioning and lighting conditions of an artwork. Thus, in 1930, the photographer Hermann Wagner made open-air photographs of sculptures according to her artistic sensibility. However, what all three photographers, and many others from the 1930s onwards, have in common is their wish to pay homage to the sculptural form elements. Some faces are thus “petrified” in both senses of the word (fig. 1). WALTER HEGE, TO WHOM WE OWE EXCEPTIONAL IMAGES NOT ONLY OF THE SCULPTURES IN OLYMPIA BUT ALSO OF THE STATUES OF THE FOUNDERS OF NURNBURG CATHEDRAL, PRaised THE “FINE, BEAUTIFUL PLASTICITY” REVEALED BY THE LIGHT OF THE SUN. IN CONTRAST, THE POET AND PHOTOGRAPHER ILSE SCHNEIDER-LENGYEL EMPLOYED HARD, ARTIFICIAL LIGHT IN HER ARTISTIC INVESTIGATION OF ROMAN PORTRAITURE. HER PHOTOGRAPHS, WHICH WERE PUBLISHED IN 1940, AIM AT AN EXPRESSIONISTIC CHARACTERISATION OF THE PERSON PORTRAYED BY MEANS OF ABRUPT, ADDITIVE FORM ELEMENTS. THESE INTERPRETATIONS ARE INFLUENCED BY AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES, THE FUNCTION ASSIGNED TO THE IMAGES AND THE QUESTIONS ASKED OF THE OBJECT. NOT EVEN THE MOST RECENT RECORDING AND REPRODUCTION TECHNIQUES, INCLUDING THOSE THAT MAKE USE OF ALL THREE DIMENSIONS, CAN GENERATE AN UNDECEPTIVE IMAGE. AN IMAGE CAN NEVER BE A VALID SUBSTITUTE FOR THE ORIGINAL – BUT SOMETIMES IT IS INDEED MORE BEAUTIFUL.

References:
– Fig. 1: Ludwig Goldschiöeder, Ilse Schneider-Lengyel, Roman Portraits (London 1940) pl. 40. – Fig. 2: Ernst Langlotz, Walter Herwig Schuchhardt, Archäische Plastik auf der Akropolis (Frankfurt am Main 1941) pl. 41. – Fig. 3: Munich, LMU, Institute for Classical Archaeology.

Fig. 2: Statues of kouroi from the Athenian Acropolis. Photo: Hermann Wagner

Fig. 3: A statue of a fisher, Rome, Vatican Museums, Galeria dei Candelabri

Hermann Wagner and Walter Hege worked together with archaeologists and art historians, whereas Ilse Schneider-Lengyel expressed herself freely and interpreted the sculptures according to her artistic sensibility. However, what all three photographers, and many others from the 1930s onwards, have in common is their wish to pay homage to the sculpture as a work of art. This was not self-evident from an archaeological and scholarly perspective. Rather, as soon as a sculpture is regarded not as an individual achievement but as an example of an iconographical group or even as serially produced, the photographic requirements inevitably change. If images are to serve as the basis for documentary work, they have to be made according to specific criteria that enable precise comparisons. Such an approach is particularly relevant with regard of the study of the numerous ancient copies of Greek statues and the typologically bound series of Roman portraits. Archaeologists had pointed out the need for such photographs as early as the 19th century, but it was only in 1974 that the archaeologist Klaus Fittschen emphatically set down the rules according to which these images should be made, stating that portraits should always be photographed at eye level and in a strictly frontal view, strict profile, and from the back. Some years later, Ernst Berger, director of the Basel Antikenmuseum, added the criterion that statues should always be reproduced in full size. Furthermore, he sought to improve methodical accuracy by specifying that the sculptures should always be photographed using the same lighting conditions, from the same distance and using telephoto lenses with identical focal lengths. He himself met these objectives in the documentation accompanying the exhibition “Der Entwurf des Künstlers” (“The Artist’s Design”) held in Basel in 1992.

Photographs are an indispensable tool for supporting the memory and facilitating communication in all artistic genres including that of sculpture. However, three-dimensional art works invite a much wider range of visual interpretations than does two-dimensional art. These interpretations are influenced by aesthetic principles, the function assigned to the images and the questions asked of the object. Not even the most recent recording and reproduction techniques, including those that make use of all three dimensions, can generate an undeceptive image. An image can never be a valid substitute for the original – but sometimes it is indeed more beautiful.
For further reading:


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My Choice

A Laconian Kouros

By Jean-David Cahn

A short while ago I made an exciting discovery: an unusually large handle in the shape of a youth that probably belonged to a patera, or maybe to a mirror. This superb sculpture was erroneously described as Western Greek and assigned far too late a date. It is, in fact, a very rare piece of Laconian bronze metalwork.

The body of the youth is remarkably slender but powerfully built with broad shoulders, strong thighs and taut buttocks. The abdominal muscles are precisely incised and each one is slightly domed. The shins are accentuated by a fine ridge which transitions into bud-shaped knee caps similar to those found in the Early Archaic sculptural group of Kleobis and Biton dating from ca. 580 B.C. The reverse was crafted with equal care and precision. The thick, stepped hair cascades down the youth’s back, ending in finely knotted strands. A further decorative accent is provided by the delicately engraved lotus bud on the back of the crescent-shaped element into which the rim of the patera was inserted.

The face is characterised by a bulbous nose, broad lips, almond-shaped eyes and sharp-edged eye brows. The facial features are arranged paratactically, but form a compact whole. The two snakes held up like whips are a remarkable and intriguing feature, all the more so as only the heads and necks are actually represented. Lillian Stoner will explore their meaning in greater detail in CQ 1/2019.

This wonderful bronze with a beautiful grey-green, shiny patina was acquired before 1976 by the late Elsa Bloch-Diener (1922–2012), a collector and art dealer from Berne whom I knew very well.
Preserving Find Spots in Source Countries

By Vincent Geerling

The great achievement of the UNESCO 1970 Convention was to make art and antique dealers clean up their act where necessary and to induce organizations like the British Antiquities Dealers’ Association (ADA) and the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA) to introduce strict codes of ethics and due diligence rules. However, in recent years, art and antique dealers have suffered from the fact that in the debate no distinction is made between illicit activities, which we all want to fight, and the legitimate trade that has a tradition dating back hundreds of years.

Increased awareness and the measures generated by UNESCO 1970 have helped dramatically diminish the trafficking of cultural goods over the past 45 years, and it is time to acknowledge that. The focus of UNESCO’s efforts should turn more to tackling the problem at the roots, in source countries like Syria and Iraq, but also in Egypt and Turkey. Most of the attention has been focused on the return of cultural property, thus fighting the symptoms and not the causes of trafficking. But all the signatories of the convention have also committed themselves to obligations, the most important of which are formulated in Article 5.

Art. 5 b commits these countries to “establishing and keeping up to date, on the basis of a national inventory of protected property, a list of important public and private cultural property whose export would constitute an appreciable impoverishment of the national cultural heritage.” For decades, the art world has been waiting in vain for those lists, which would help improve due diligence processes. However, with the exception of a few countries like The Netherlands and Germany, there are to my knowledge no lists available from any of the source countries. UNESCO needs to help those countries to fulfil their obligations. With the tragedies unfolding over the past few years in Iraq, Syria and recently Yemen and Libya, now is the time to do so.

The formulating of the benefits and obligations from the UNESCO Convention has been a long and careful process. Therefore it is important to point to some more obligations, formulated in Art. 5 d, “organizing the supervision of archaeological excavations, ensuring the preservation in situ of certain cultural property, and protecting certain areas reserved for future archaeological research.” If source countries had fulfilled these obligations, severe damage to archaeological sites would have been prevented, thus protecting the objects in their context, in situ, as the convention obliges. That is crucial for archaeology. Once the context of an object is lost, the object has lost its archaeological value forever. Such objects might be returned to the country of origin, but this will not give them back their archaeological value. This means that prevention by protection, as clearly formulated in Art. 5, is of vital importance. Another obligation, under Art. 5 e, commits signatories to “taking educational measures to stimulate and develop respect for the cultural heritage.” I would argue that helping source countries to fulfill the obligations they signed up to years ago should be the primary aim of UNESCO in the years to come.

During the TAIEX-PI Workshop on Protecting Iraqi Cultural Heritage and Fighting Terrorism hosted by the European Union in Brussels on 30–31 May 2018, I gave a presentation in which I argued that the real challenge will be thinking outside the box, and I asked them not to dismiss the ideas I presented without first giving them due consideration. I pointed out that the majority of objects are only of importance for archaeology if they are found in undisturbed circumstances, so preservation in situ is crucial. Everybody understands that the 30,000 archaeological sites in Iraq, for example, can never be protected by the police alone; the state needs the help of the local population. However, if one realizes that “in England alone there are almost 20,000 scheduled monuments” (cf. Cahn’s Quarterly 1/2018, pp. 4–5) that are protected by law – a set of regulations that are mostly respected – there is no reason why such protection could not be set up in “source countries”. To this effect, the local population should be educated about the importance of the past, as UNESCO formulated 45 years ago. Experience shows that if locals take pride in their past it will help prevent them from stealing their own history, and they are more likely to protect it. If such policies are carried out properly, eventually many of these places could generate tourism and with that prosperity.

In source countries, people find ancient objects almost every day during agricultural
and building activities. Possessing such objects is strictly forbidden, but these people are poor, so in all probability they sell the objects quickly to merchants. It would be far more productive if the law allowed the regulated sale of unimportant chance finds. Authorities would not have to punish these people, but could reward them for reporting their finds, thereby helping to create a viable registered database of objects. The state should give the honest finder a fair share of the proceeds, say 25% of estimated market value. In this way people would be encouraged to co-operate and support correct reporting procedures.

Yes, I do strongly believe that the sale of unimportant chance finds should be allowed in source countries, following the example of the UK and The Netherlands. The current restrictive regime with severe penalties clearly fails to prevent trafficking, as history has shown, so why not try something else? Source countries could hugely benefit from following the example of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS) in the United Kingdom, which has enjoyed twenty years of success already. To give you an idea of the numbers, I quote from the 2016 report: "81,914 finds were recorded; a total of 1,303,504 on the PAS database to date. (...) 90% of finds were found on cultivated land, where they are susceptible to plough damage and artificial and natural corrosion." Such numbers could never have been achieved without the help of the population and I believe people will be happy to help. Reported and recorded finds that are not important could even be exported with a licence, and the proceeds used to finance excavations on behalf of the state.

I proposed during the EU workshop that the European Union, with the help of UNESCO experts, should create a task force to support source countries with setting up the systems needed for this vital protection of archaeological sites.

Cypriote sculptures have a fascination all of their own which is in part due to the unique way in which Levantine and Phoenician influences blend with the art of Greece to form an independent artistic language. It would, therefore, be wrong to locate Cypriote art on the periphery of that of Greece. As there were no marble quarries on Cyprus, sculptors used limestone, a softer and more brittle material that required a somewhat different working technique. Despite the constraints posed by this more humble stone, the Cypriote artists succeeded in creating great masterpieces.

I would like to present this well-preserved Archaic head, not only because it is of exceptionally high quality but also because it has a superb collecting history. It formed part of the collection of Louis de Clercq (1836-1901) which was published in 1908 by André de Ridder, the then conservator of Greek and Roman art at the Louvre. The fine, soft face with sharply drawn, almond-shaped eyes and distinctive smile is offset by the energetically and somewhat more summarily sculpted hair that is adorned by a wreath of upright laurel leaves. The sculpture was made about a generation after the Archaic Style had passed its peak in Greece, as this style flourished in Cyprus slightly later. The head captivates the eye on account of the almost perfect balance of its overall shape and the visual excitement engendered by the contrasts in its design, such as the tension between the delicately modelled face and the abstract rendering of the hair.

This artwork is a lucky find as it is absolutely on a par with Greek sculpture. Greek marble heads of the Archaic Period of a comparable artistic quality and state of preservation – not to mention provenance – are all but non-existent on the art market. I can therefore warmly recommend this Cypriote head.
Following the contribution by Michael Lewis, "Preserving the Past: Recording Archaeological Finds Made by the Public", in the last issue of Cahn’s Quarterly (CQ1/2018, pp. 4-5), I was asked whether the “Portable Antiquities Scheme” (PAS), which was introduced in Great Britain twenty years ago, could serve as an example or model for Switzerland.

Before delving any deeper into the matter, it is important to note that the legal situation in Switzerland is both clearer and – in line with the goal of ensuring the long-term protection of the country’s cultural heritage – stricter than in Great Britain. According to Art. 724 of the Schweizerisches Zivilgesetzbuch (ZGB, Swiss Civil Code) all finds made in the soil are public property. They must therefore be handed over to the responsible cantonal authorities regardless of the circumstances under which and by whom they were found. Furthermore, all 26 cantons have either a specialist unit for archaeology or at least an official reporting office which is responsible for the protection of its archaeological heritage and for storing any finds. The cantonal laws and directives not only describe the tasks and competences of the specialist units but also specify, for instance, that the use of metal detectors is prohibited or requires a license.

However, due to their limited resources, which also have to cover rescue excavations in connection with building activities, these specialist units are generally unable to carry out proactive, i.e. systematic and comprehensive surveys. Such capacity bottlenecks can, on a case-by-case basis, be relieved with the help of university institutes for archaeology, but these, too, cannot ensure the long-term monitoring of an entire area.

Not least for this reason, many specialist units nowadays collaborate closely, sometimes on an almost institutionalised level, with non-professional volunteers. The basis for this type of cooperation is provided by the “Richtlinien für die Zusammenarbeit mit Ehrenamtlichen” (Guidelines for Collaboration with Volunteers) published in 2013 by the Konferenz Schweizerischer Kantonalarchäologinnen und Kantonalarchäologen (KSKA, Conference of Swiss Cantonal Archaeologists) and the “Guidelines – Richtlinien für archäologische Untersuchungen” (Guidelines for Archaeological Investigations) published in 2015 by the Trägerverein Horizont. Furthermore, an important role is played by the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Prospektion Schweiz (AGPS, Work Group Prospection Switzerland) which acts as an umbrella organisation and network for all parties involved in prospection, such as university institutes, cantonal specialist units and non-professional volunteers.

The “Portable Antiquities Scheme” is based on a very different legal and institutional framework and cannot therefore be applied to the Swiss context, or only to a very limited degree. This does not, however, mean that PAS should be rejected a priori. Quite the contrary: The scheme shows impressively how great the potential of long-term, spatially comprehensive prospection projects and constructive public-private collaboration can be with regard to the investigation of the settlement history of specific areas – and not just in those cases in which the archaeological heritage can be protected only partially or not at all because of an insufficient legal basis, the lack of an institutional framework and/or deficient resources.

The rigorous and systematic reporting of finds in the context of PAS, i.e. their documentation in a central and publicly accessible database, shows how great the potential of long-term, spatially comprehensive prospection projects and constructive public-private collaboration can be with regard to the investigation of the settlement history of specific areas – even in those cases in which the archaeological heritage can be protected only partially or not at all because of an insufficient legal basis, the lack of an institutional framework and/or deficient resources.
A Hand of a Kouros

By Jean-David Cahn

Surviving Archaic sculpture is very rare and generally in a poor state of preservation. Notwithstanding this, the sculpture of this period has provided us with some of the finest works of art created in Antiquity. The intensity and sheer energy of the sculptures testifies to the skill of the craftsmen who made them and surprises and moves us despite the often corroded and battered condition of the pieces.

Take, for example, this life-size left hand of a kouros who was depicted in the typical pose, striding forward energetically. The hand originally touched his left thigh – the contact area is clearly visible – and it is clenched to form a fist in a gesture of strength and youthful potency. But see how elongated the hand is with its refined fingers and slender thumb! Power and elegance are in perfect harmony with each other.

Dating a fragment like this hand is not easy due to the rich local variety of landscape styles, but I would suggest a date of ca. 550 B.C. It is particularly close to the kouros of Tenea in Munich, who has slightly shorter fingers but the same inwardly curled finger tips. Possibly sculpted on one of the Greek Islands, the hand appears to have been broken off in Antiquity as the fine iron-oxide patina covers the entire surface including the areas of breakage.

Archaic sculpture is very rare on the market and this is also reflected in the limited museum holdings outside Greece. It is therefore considered exquisite to be able to show Archaic sculpture, which in view of its artistic quality is undoubtedly a match for Classical sculpture – I personally prefer Archaic over Classical art. From a historical point of view, the Archaic Period is extraordinarily interesting. It was an aristocratic society in which something akin to an awareness of its own intellectual identity began to emerge. This was the period when the oral tradition was increasingly fixed in writing and when the Iliad and the Odyssey were first written down. Preceding the period of radical social change that followed in the wake of the catastrophic Persian invasion of Greece, it appears to me as a still slightly innocent world, lacking a single dominant centre of power and without the ambition to totally destroy its enemies on the battlefield. This fragment representing the hand of a kouros thus speaks to me of the almost Arcadian time before the loss of the Archaic smile.

Links:
1 http://www.archaeologie.ch/d.htm
2 http://www.archaeologie.ch/archaeologie_richtlinien_ehrenamtliche_version%202010-2013.pdf
4 https://www.prospektion.ch
5 https://www.fundmuenzen.ch/dienstleistungen/datenbanken/muenzen.php

Peter-Andrew Schwarz is Vindonissa Professor for Provincial Roman Archaeology at Basel University and as part of his teaching and research activities has carried out various prospection projects in Cantons Aargau, Baselland, Jura and Obwalden. He is inter alia member of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Prospektion Schweiz (AGPS), the Commission of the Inventar der Fundmünzen der Schweiz (IFS) and the Commission du Patrimoine Archéologique et Paléontologique (CPAP) of Canton Jura.
Editorial

Dear Readers,

Some time ago I learned of the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS), which since 1997 has had considerable success in recording archaeological finds made by the public in both England and Wales and has drawn up clear rules on how such found objects should be handled. I was instantly won over by this scheme, which seems to me to provide a constructive and pragmatic solution to the thorny issue of how we should treat objects not found in the course of official archaeological excavations. The PAS has transparent rules governing ownership and the extent to which such finds can be marketed. Because these rules encourage detectorists to have their finds expertly recorded, they ensure that scholars and archaeologists benefit as well. I was therefore delighted when Michael Lewis, Head of Portable Antiquities & Treasure at the British Museum, agreed to explain the PAS in this edition of Cahn’s Quarterly (see pp. 4–5).

I am firmly convinced that the suppression of opinions is the wrong way to go. Rejecting dialogue is always unwise and does not serve anybody. Title to objects found in the ground should not be prohibited, as people quite naturally feel the need to possess a piece of their own heritage, whether because they love art or because they are interested in history. This, however, calls for clear and practicable rules and conditions. As an incredibly intelligent scheme that quite obviously grew out of a culture of listening, the PAS answers this purpose perfectly and should be adopted by other countries, too, including Switzerland.


The Debate

Answers to A Moral Dilemma (2)

In our previous issue of Cahn’s Quarterly we published some letters from readers commenting on the problem posed by the ban on publishing objects without a secure provenance that was raised in the Editorial of CQ 3/2017. Here, with the author’s permission, we are publishing another letter received in answer to the issues raised there by Jean-David Cahn.

Dear Jean-David

Although I myself am not an art dealer, I am taking the liberty of replying briefly to the dilemma posed by the official ban on publishing undocumented antiquities, that is to say, to the question of why institutions of renown, and hence of relevance to the market, should not be allowed to say anything about objects whose legal origins cannot be proven and for which the only written sources date from after 1970.

To cut to the chase, I would like to see more of us courageously drawing a distinction between academic and commercial interests. As you rightly say, there can be no grounds whatsoever for withholding an interesting object from scientific inquiry. On the contrary, if academic teaching and research are truly free, then they must be free to engage in the academic study of so-called “occult” finds. Such study may close gaps in what is known of the object’s provenance and provide deeper insight into its cultural and archaeological context – irrespective of the legal issue of whether the object under discussion might have been stolen or looted from a tomb. Academic teaching and research may be free, but they are still governed by a code of ethics, which in matters of provenance, especially, is bound not by commercial opportunity but solely by the truth. The German Archaeological Institute has the choice between describing a given masterpiece in scholarly terms and flagging the fact that its legal provenance has not been fully cleared, is not beyond reproach, or might not be legally unimpeachable. In the latter case, it could quite legitimately be argued that a serious institution would be well advised not to say anything at all about such an object, thereby giving the legal aspects precedence over the academic. I myself, however, am of the opinion that even where there are doubts concerning the legality of an object’s origins, academic descriptions and speculation should not...
be censored, since the illegal procurement – the looting of a tomb, in other words – cannot be undone by remaining silent on the art-historical value of a work. The art trade has little to gain from this, since a work without a faultless provenance is all but impossible to sell, even if it has been the subject of scholarly research.

As to the question of inadequate proof of provenance, my plea would be in favour of free trade; that is, proof of legal origins should be deemed lacking only in the absence of all sources predating 1970 – in other words, not just written sources but also photographs and evidence provided by the object’s conservation history. Where such sources are missing entirely, or where there are good grounds for assuming the object to have come from an illegal excavation, the restrictions on publication mentioned above may indeed help curb the trade in artefacts of dubious provenance. The prevailing views on this question nevertheless remain controversial.

Sincerely,
Thomas Christ
Member of the Foundation Board of the Basel Institute on Governance

Some Remarks on Thomas Christ’s Contribution

I would like to thank Thomas Christ warmly for sharing his thoughts with us on this complex topic. As the column “The Debate” provides the opportunity to discuss controversial topics, it does at times occur that my stance differs from that voiced by the authors contributing to this column. I would therefore like to point out that in my opinion it is too categorical and too simple to assume that an object has no legal provenance if there is no pre-1970 documentation. The presumption of innocence should hold for such objects, too. It is easily possible that an object was offered on the art market or entered a collection in an absolutely legal manner, even if no documents that prove this have been preserved. Furthermore, I am convinced that the detrimental effect on the illicit art trade of a publication ban for objects with no pre-1970 documentation is greatly overestimated and is by no means commensurate with the considerable loss of knowledge that such a ban entails.

Jean-David Cahn

Clay Rattles from the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age

By Ariane Ballmer

Prehistoric objects often seem strangely static and cut off from the sensory world to which they once belonged: they are immobile, odourless, and silent. Besides the fossilized and often patchy archaeological situation, the absence of writing means that the relevant circumstances cannot even be reconstructed through textual sources. A few categories of archaeological object nevertheless afford us direct access to the deliberately produced and experienced sounds of the past. Among these are rattles, in other words rhythm instruments.

In Europe, rattles made of clay begin to appear here and there from the Early Bronze Age onwards, i.e. from the 2nd millennium B.C., especially in the Danube-Tisza region. The scope of their distribution broadens noticeably as of the Late Bronze Age. Most prehistoric clay rattles found in Central Europe date from the period between ca. 1050-500 B.C. The objects presented here were discovered in Silesia (south-western Poland), which was also the heartland of what we define as Lusatian culture. The material remains of Lusatian culture fall in the period between ca. 1400-500 B.C., in other words the Late Bronze and Early Iron Age, when it was the predominant cultural group in eastern Central Europe. Its highly developed metallurgical skills and extensive exchange networks reflect its cultural pre-eminence. The Lusatian culture is further characterised by large, multi-generational burial fields containing grave urns flanked by a lavish array of ceramic vessels by way of grave goods.

A wide range of rattle shapes is known from the Lusatian culture’s sphere of influence. These are either stylizations of motifs drawn from everyday life (e.g. animals, ceramic pots, or edible plant parts such as fruits, vegetables, roots and tubers) or abstract geometrical shapes. In principle they
Preserving the Past: Recording Archaeological Finds Made by the Public

By Michael Lewis

Antiquities law in Great Britain is amongst the most liberal in Europe. Searching for antiquities is legal, and since archaeology is unlicensed, anyone can do it. In England and Wales, it is the landowner, not the State, that normally has best title to anything found on their land. It might seem that this situation puts at risk the historic environment, but in fact the story over the last 20 years is more positive. Although there are unscrupulous individuals, many people searching for archaeology, most being metal-detectorists, work within the law and report their finds.

The main mechanism of the State to protect archaeology is through the “scheduling” of ancient monuments (Ancient Monuments & Archaeological Areas Act 1979) and the Treasure Act 1996. In England alone there are almost 20,000 scheduled monuments, and it is an offence to excavate such sites without a licence; this restriction includes the use of metal-detectors. The State also requires anyone (including archaeologists) finding Treasure to report these finds.

The Treasure Act states that all objects at least 300 years old with at least 10 per cent gold or silver must be reported. All objects found in association with Treasure are also potential Treasure, as are prehistoric base-metal assemblages, and finds that would have been Treasure Trove.

In 1997, the Government established pilot schemes to encourage the voluntary recording of all archaeological finds not covered by the Act. This happens through a national network of archaeologists known as Finds Liaison Officers (FLOs) working for the Portable Antiquities Scheme (PAS). The Scheme is managed by the British Museum and the National Museum of Wales, and funded through Government grant-in-aid and local partner contributions.

The primary aim of the PAS is to advance knowledge by recording archaeological finds made by the public. Its 40 FLOs are based in museums and other heritage organisations, and to date have recorded over 1.3 million finds: see http://finds.org.uk. Although this data is made publicly available online, precise findspot information is only shared with archaeologists and bona fide researchers. Most of these finds are discovered through metal-detecting, the majority coming from cultivated land where they are at risk from agricultural activity.

At least 615 research projects have used PAS data to date, including 127 PhD students. Research using PAS data has included a project to examine ‘hoarding practice’ in Iron Age and Roman Britain (University of Leicester) and “EngLaid” (Oxford), which analysed change in the English landscape between ca.1500 B.C. and 1086 A.D. Current PhD topics include Rob Webley (York) characterising metalwork of the Anglo-Norman period, and Sam Rowe (Huddersfield) exploring the condition of metal artefacts in the plough-soil. PAS data are also used by Historic Environment Records for development control and other archaeological work.

It is a major advantage for the PAS that its FLOs are based in local museums or other heritage organisations. FLOs regularly visit metal-detecting clubs and local societies, give talks, and organise local outreach events. Anyone might discover archaeology, so it is important for the FLOs to reach out to all. Since 2015, through the Heritage Lottery funded project “PASi Explorers”, the PAS has also been providing opportunities for people to volunteer with the Scheme and learn more about archaeological finds.

The purpose of the Act is to enable museums to acquire the most important archaeological finds. In such cases a reward, equal to the market value of the find, is paid to the finder/landowner: usually split 50/50. The value is recommended by the (independent) Treasure Valuation Committee to be agreed by the Secretary of State. Treasure finds not acquired by museums are “disclaimed” and returned to the finder/landowner. Since the Act became law, the number of cases reported has increased from 201 in 1998 to 1268 in 2017.

Metal-detecting in Hertfordshire as part of an archaeological survey.

Copper-alloy Anglo-Saxon “Winchester style” strap-end from Dorset (PAS: DEV-264F62), recorded by the PAS.

Copper-alloy Anglo-Saxon “Winchester style” strap-end from Dorset (PAS: DEV-264F62), recorded by the PAS.
The PAS promotes best archaeological practice. Metal-detecting can be damaging to archaeology, so finders are encouraged to follow the Code of Practice for Responsible Metal Detecting in England and Wales. This outlines what finders should do before, while and after metal-detecting. It is a voluntary code, so does not have any weight in law, but some landowners require finders to follow it. Likewise, it is a condition of land under stewardship (where landowners are paid subsidies to manage their land) that finders must follow the Code. The PAS also works closely with the police and other law enforcement authorities to combat illegal metal-detecting.

Although some archaeologists would like all archaeological finds to end up in museums, most museums are selective in what they acquire. It is even the case that many Treasure finds are not acquired. The reasons for this are complex. It is usually the case that unwanted objects are poor examples or common types, but sometimes museums do not acquire because the costs are too high. The PAS, therefore, has an essential role in preserving a record of the past.

My Choice

A Pelike with a Dipinto

By Jean-David Cahn

Just recently I acquired a small, Attic, red-figure pelike in an excellent state of preservation. The vase itself is intact, the glaze a deep blue-black, and the painting wonderfully fresh. On each side is a youth. Although separated by the handle, the two young men are shown facing each other and are deep in conversation. The one standing upright, his whole body concealed underneath his cloak, seems to be the one leading the conversation. The other is looking down, lost in thought. His insecurity or indecisiveness is reflected in the instability of his pose: with one foot set back, he is leaning forwards, supporting himself on his Attic staff. What might they be talking about? Unfortunately, we can do no more than guess at the topic of discussion.

Especially worthy of note is the outline drawing scored into the clay, which is still clearly visible on both figures. These lines show the outline of their nude bodies and even the folds of the drapery in places. They would have served as guidance for the artist, who nevertheless took certain liberties when executing the paintings. The identity of the painter eludes us, but he was undoubtedly a very accomplished one.

But the real surprise becomes apparent only when the vase is turned on its head, for on the underside of the base is a caricatured face, first finely engraved and then drawn over! This is most unusual. The fleshy lips, bulbous nose and jutting chin suggest that this is a specific individual – possibly someone from the workshop or perhaps even the artist himself? The vase belongs to the period that saw the first tentative ventures into the art of portraiture. Thus it might serve as a good starting point for a discussion of how caricatures perhaps contributed to the development of this new genre, given that they, too, represent a shift away from canonical idealization to likenesses that emphasized the subjects’ individuality – albeit by exaggerating their most distinctive features.
Answers to a Moral Dilemma

For many years, the German Archaeological Institute and the Archaeological Institute of America have demanded of their authors and members not to publish archaeological objects with no pre-1970 documentation and whose legal provenance has not been fully clarified. In the Editorial of CQ 3/2017, Jean-David Cahn drew attention to the disastrous consequences of this act of self-censorship for archaeology as a science. In the following weeks we received many emphatic letters from readers addressing this thorny topic. With their permission we are publishing some of their statements here.

Dear David

I would like to make just a short remark on your interesting Editorial in the recent CQ. Of course you are completely right in saying that any study on (groups) of objects must incorporate all objects known from the art market, together with the objects published in excavation reports, in museum and private collection etc. in order to get a complete insight and understanding as best one can.

To mention just one example, all studies on trade of pottery in a specific period – and there are many of them – are completely invalid if vases from the art market and private collections are neglected for some ideological reason. Moreover, it is obvious that the oeuvre of an individual Greek vase-painter should be compiled including the numerous pieces known to come from the art market. To neglect those vases would be a mistake and will result in a serious shortcoming in scholarly respects. In short, I am on your side in this discussion. I suppose this is what you expected.

Kind regards, Herman

Herman Brijder, Professor Emeritus of Classical Archaeology and History of Ancient Art, University of Amsterdam. Former director of the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam. Former publisher and editor-in-chief of the Allard Pierson Series

Dear Mr Cahn

I read your article with great interest and completely agree with you. Knowledge of art must be public and everything that is known about works of art belongs to all of humanity. As regrettable as it is when the exact origin of an object is not known, it is just as much a fragmentation as an arm missing from a statue. If these objects are published, then in a certain sense they are also safe, which is surely the most important thing.

Best wishes, Prof. Dr. Norbert Knopp
Professor Emeritus of Art History, University of Eichstätt

Dear David

Here in Germany, too, a lot of things have been going wrong with regard to how looted art is handled and the new Act to Protect German Cultural Property (KSchG) with its disastrous consequences for both the art trade and for provenance research generally.

Worst of all, Ms Grütters and Mr Winands seem hell-bent on shutting down large parts of the art trade – and not just the trade in antiquities and coins.

This can lead to some truly grotesque situations: Coin dealers are being arrested and kept in custody on grounds of their inability to prove where their coins come from, while the coins themselves remain confiscated pending submission of documentation. With the normal burden of proof thus reversed, we dealers are supposed to account for the whereabouts of the items in our possession between 1933 and 1989 – 1989 because the GDR period and with it the trading activities of Schalck-Golodkowski are now under scrutiny, too. And these rules apply to every object, irrespective of price category.

Just last week I received an inquiry from the Lüneburg Museum, which wanted to know where I had purchased a mustard pot that I sold to them in 1988. How am I supposed to supply such information thirty years on? Our fellow art dealer Mr Andreas of J.P. Schneider in Frankfurt and I, together with several other dealers, auctioneers, professional associations and collectors, are now doing some intensive lobbying against both the KSchG and the planned looted art act. Actions for the infringement of European competition law and of more than one clause of the German constitution are now pending before both the European Court and the Federal Court of Justice in Karlsruhe.

For this reason, too, your article was very heartening. In the sincere hope that the times may yet take a turn for the good, I thank you for your work and with cordial greetings remain

Your Peter
Gallery Henrich, Munich

Dear David

Thank you for your interesting and thought-provoking editorial. I would like to express my basic agreement with the view you’ve expressed. As you do, I unreservedly condemn the illicit trade in antiquities and thus all illegal excavations which result in the destruction of the socio-historical context of archaeological artefacts and thus in the loss of important, sometimes essential, information.

Yet, to dogmatically prohibit the publication of archaeological material of uncertain provenance seems to me counterproductive, not only for the reason you state, i.e. that artworks may well be bearers of important messages even if their original socio-historical context has been lost (Exekias’s amphora in the Vatican could be mentioned as one of many examples!), but also because perversely such a prohibition actually assists the illicit trade by allowing hundreds, if not thousands, of fakes to go undetected.

At Mediterranean Archaeology, we therefore decide on a case-by-case basis whether or not to publish a paper presenting an artefact of uncertified origin. It goes without saying that we will not accept for publication an object that is likely to have come from an illegal excavation, nor would we publish a paper that might increase its commercial value.

Jean-Paul Desceudres
Editor of Mediterranean Archaeology
A majority of the books published in the last fifty years about ancient art have depended on illustration of objects which are not from controlled excavations, and to pretend that they are therefore illegal, useless and misleading is, of course, absurd, yet this is the logical conclusion to be drawn if the extreme view about “academic” or “moral” integrity is accepted, and all objects not from controlled excavations are ignored. It is a view more easily adopted by a lawyer than a scholar. But the market is still well supplied with objects which seem to have no recent and authentic recorded history, whether from collections or excavation. It is difficult to see that “morbidity” is in any way involved, rather than the fear that we may be misled by what is not authentically ancient, and that we are incapable of 100 percent certainty in the matter. At any rate, science can determine date for us, so we are left with the question whether it is better to ignore what might be an important relic of Antiquity in the interests of a “moral” approach to site-robbers and the market. Certainly, forgers do not deserve to succeed, but I think we have their measure by now. Equally, robbers of sites do not deserve to succeed, but it is very doubtful whether sites can ever be controlled effectively, despite noble efforts by “source countries”.

Some years ago it was said that in Turkey boys who found antiquities on an ancient site could sell them to dealers who would then supply them with forgeries to sell on to tourists/collectors. Yet the recent publication of some 500 Roman seals, gems and rings, picked up over some 30 years by a family walking over the fields concealing the ancient city of Caesarea (S. Amoral-Stark & M. Hershkovitz, Ancient Gems, Finger Rings and Seal Boxes from Caesarea Maritima: the Hendler Collection, 2016) shows how much is still on the surface, and no less valid as evidence than excavated material. Take for an example a silver chalice of no known provenance in the Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem of around A.D. 500 (Guide to the Collection, 2002, p. 136). It is no doubt from the Palestine area and its Latin inscriptions show it to have been made for a Eucharist ceremony – “Holy is God, holy the mighty one, holy the immortal one, have mercy on us” – typical for the Eastern Orthodox Church. Its lack of detailed provenance cannot disqualify it as a record of Antiquity. It is, indeed, unusual but totally plausible. It would have been a rather different matter if its shape and the inscriptions were quite unique, and its role in Antiquity difficult to explain. Such objects would indeed be suspect, although generally a forger has not the imagination to produce something totally unique, plausible or not, but goes for the commonplace.

It is perhaps a little unwise to give Antiquity the credit for anything quite unexpected or unusual, yet excavation has shown just how innovative Antiquity could be, especially in out-of-the-way places. The classicising works found in Central Asia often seem barely credible in terms of established and conventional scholarship, yet they are from excavation (e.g., the gilt silver disc from Kandahar, J. Boardman, The Greeks in Asia, 2015, pl. XVII; here, fig. 1) and we would have lost much if they had not been excavated but “found” and discredited. We need to be careful but not ungenerous in our assessment of what the past can tell us.
The Legal Trade with Egyptian Art

The former Egyptian Antiquities Minister Mamdouh al-Damaty dispels clichés about the export of Egyptian artefacts

A press statement by the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art

Egypt’s former Antiquities Minister has said that retrieving Egyptian artefacts from abroad is not in Egypt’s interests, news sources from within the country report.

Prof. Mamdouh al-Damaty, an Egyptologist who was Minister from 2014-2016 and believes that displaying his country’s heritage in other nations promotes Egypt across the world, also pointed out that the majority of Egyptian artefacts abroad were legally exported before laws were introduced to ban exports.

Vincent Geerling, chairman of the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA), has welcomed Damaty’s speech, and is calling on the authorities in Egypt to take note. Geerling has also suggested that re-introducing licensed sales of minor artefacts might be a way of helping Egypt to finance the urgently needed protection of archaeological sites.

“At IADAA, we have been campaigning for years on the issue of what has and hasn’t been legally exported, while watching with dismay as international bodies introduce inappropriate policy to deal with perceived wrongs that, for the most part, do not exist,” said Geerling. “So much of what Prof. Damaty is saying is exactly what we have been arguing for a long time now, but our views have been ignored or dismissed. Hopefully, now someone as distinguished and knowledgeable as Egypt’s former Antiquities Minister has put forward the same arguments, we will all be listened to.”

Those arguments acknowledge the fact that Egypt traded its artefacts legally over long periods, including in the 20th century, when the Cairo Museum had its own saleroom (see CQ 4/2016, pp. 4-5). “In many other cases,” one news report quoted Damaty, “artefacts were presented by Egypt’s kings as gifts to foreign dignitaries, rulers and officials, before the development of the current laws to protect antiquities and ban this habit.” Foreign archaeological missions were also allowed to take a percentage of the artefacts they discovered in Egypt, making it impossible for Egypt to recover these artefacts now, because they were legally exported, he said. In fact, Damaty went as far as stating that the majority of Egyptian artefacts abroad had been legally exported.

His speech came as Egypt’s ongoing financial problems led to the suspension of 14 restoration projects and cutbacks in measures to protect archaeological sites, reports said. Significantly, before the coup the Antiquities Ministry paid for all the projects itself and was a net contributor to government coffers, whereas now it depends on central funding.

“Until recently,” Geerling said, “Egyptian embassies challenged the sale of many artefacts, that had been in collections for decades and more, at fairs or auction, without providing any evidence at all to show that they were stolen. The current Egyptian authorities’ view is that unless collectors, dealers and auction houses can demonstrate an unbroken provenance from when an object was excavated, it should be deemed illicit – guilty until proved innocent, if you like. That is legally flawed.”

He argues that following the spirit of the former Antiquities Minister’s speech, such a policy needs to be replaced by something more positive. “Egypt had a legal trade in antiquities up until around 40 years ago. Why not revive a properly licensed, self-sustaining legal trade in minor objects that are of no great importance to Egypt’s national heritage,” he asks, adding that “the trade can help Egypt create a revenue stream to finance the necessary protection of archaeological sites, as it is obliged to do under Article 5 of the UNESCO 1970 convention.”
A Royal Inscription

By Jean-David Cahn

This fragment comes from the upper end of a monumental, bell-shaped column base which was roughly 120 cm in diameter. It may have graced the throne room of an Achaemenid royal residence. Preserved are the resting surface for the column, part of an ancient Persian inscription, and the decoration encircling the outside, which consists of pointed leaves with central ribs. The inscription can be translated as “… Great, King of Kings…”.

Why do I like this object so much? Even the material in its own right is fantastic: smooth, dense, and of a wonderfully deep, almost black colour. The masterly graphic design which focusses on the pure essentials also greatly impresses me. The frieze of pointed leaves is delicately sculpted with flowing transitions between the convex and concave surfaces. The ornamental inscription in a late cuneiform script is fragmentary like the object itself. It speaks mysteriously to us, like an oracle, about a king whose name is not given. The fragment does not give away its secret and thus excites the imagination. We wonder if maybe King Darius the Great is meant – one of the most important figures in Persian history who held a great fascination for the Greeks, too.

It is enthralling to possess such an artwork – a personal piece which one can put on one’s desk and which unites aesthetic pleasure with historical import.

Sources:
The Egyptian Independent: http://goo.gl/EbfgZj
Egyptian Streets: http://goo.gl/IIVfyK4

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Join Us at the 2017 CARC Workshop

By Peter Stewart

The Classical Art Research Centre at Oxford University is perhaps best known for the Beazley Archive, the physical and virtual archive of ancient Greek pottery at its heart. But our remit covers the whole of ancient Graeco-Roman art, broadly defined, and in recent years we have worked to stimulate and support new ideas and insights across the field. Free and open-minded debate is fundamental to this mission.

Since 2014 CARC has held annual, two-day, international workshops enabled by the generous support of Jean-David Cahn (who is an Oxford archaeology alumnus) and Tony Michaels. Featuring presentations from international scholars addressing key topics in the study of Greek and Roman art, these workshops are open to anyone to attend for free. The emphasis is on free-flowing debate and often friendly disagreement. As much time is devoted to discussion as to the presentations and the audiences are varied. We encourage students and non-academics in the audience to participate in the conversations.

The first workshop Etruscan Art to Roman Art? A Reappraisal addressed an old theme which has become a hot topic. What, if anything, did later Roman art owe to the Etruscans, or did Roman art (as one eminent scholar has suggested) essentially begin with the sack of Syracuse in 211 B.C.? In 2015 the workshop Replicas in Roman Art encouraged participants to try and understand the Romans’ motivations for picking and choosing from the heritage of the Greek past. Finally, in 2016, The Maker’s Share in Greek Art took us firmly back into the Classical Greek period, seeking to cast new light on what individual artists contributed to the development of Greek art, and how we might try, cautiously, to recover them from the fragmentary archaeological and textual record.

In an era when academics are under pressure to publish and deliver research “outputs”, the workshops have adopted an unusual policy, which sometimes shocks participants but nearly always delights them too. We start each workshop without any plans to publish the proceedings; any ideas about publishing the results in a single volume should come spontaneously from the participants rather than being presented as a necessary duty. The result is that speakers have felt free to explore ideas and, as we know from their feedback from past events, the workshops have percolated gradually in their minds, stimulating published research in a variety of venues further down the line.

Nevertheless, we do want the events to reach the broadest possible audience, and with this in mind, the last workshop was filmed for a live webcast, which hugely expanded the audience and reached viewers across the world who were unable to attend in person. The recording of The Maker’s Share in Greek Art is now publicly available as a University of Oxford podcast. In light of the CARC workshops’ success, we have also adopted the format of the annual CARC workshops for a new initiative called Gandhara Connections: Cross-Cultural Links in Central Asian Art (kindly supported by the Bagri Foundation and the Neil Kreitman Foundation). This new project aims to bring together expertise and pool knowledge about the Buddhist art of ancient Pakistan and its connections to classical culture.

The next CARC workshop on 28-29 September 2017 is called Transmission: The Migration of Iconography in Classical Art. It will examine the mysterious processes by which mythological imagery and other scenes in Greek and Roman art travelled across space and through time, jumping between artistic media. We hope that you will be able to join us in person or online! For free booking contact carc@classics.ox.ac.uk and for details and updates check our website: www.carc.ox.ac.uk

Why I sponsor the CARC workshop

What delights me most about the CARC workshop is that it makes the spirit of the ancient symposium come alive. The focus is on discussion and the exchange of ideas, something that is stimulated exactly because the proceedings are not published in written form. This has a liberating effect both on speakers and listeners. Top archaeologists from Europe and the USA are happy to participate despite their busy schedules because they are not burdened with the obligation to publish, and in the discussions critical and experimental thoughts can be voiced with greater ease. I am also pleased that many students make use of the opportunity offered by the workshop to meet international experts in an uninhibiting and friendly setting. I am very happy to make such an event possible together with its co-sponsor Tony Michaels, and encourage you to join us on 28-29 September, either in Oxford or live online.

Jean-David Cahn

Peter Stewart is Director of the Classical Art Research Centre, Associate Professor of Classical Art and Archaeology, and a Fellow of Wolfson College Oxford. He has worked widely on the subject of Classical art, especially Roman sculpture.
Collectors of ancient art are unwittingly helping to fund Islamist militant groups, journalists would have us believe. However, the so-called facts and figures propagated in the media are grossly exaggerated and in most cases unsubstantiated; in general they are based on speculation and assumptions. IS’s prime sources of revenue are its trade in crude oil and other raw materials as well as the extortion of protection money and pillaging. According to recent estimates, the sale of antiquities is responsible for approximately 0.8% of IS’s total revenues and is thus of marginal importance in comparison to other sources of income.

Claims made by the media that the illicit trade in cultural goods has a volume of several billion dollars prompted IADAA (International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art) to calculate the annual turnover of the legal antiquities market (for further information, see Vincent Geerling’s article in CQ 3/2016). Major auction houses and art dealers assisted IADAA in this endeavour. The result: In the year 2013, the worldwide turnover amounted to ca. 150-200 million euros, only ten percent of which were generated by the sale of works from the Middle East.

Interestingly, art dealers have yet to be approached by persons wishing to sell cultural goods from Iraq or Syria with a potentially illicit provenance, and in Switzerland there is no evidence that such goods are present on the market. A further indicator for the absence of illegal cultural property is the German customs report for the year 2015, which does not even mention antiquities. Regardless of its volume, the reputation of the entire Swiss art market would be jeopardized by the presence of an illicit trade in antiquities. Thus, as a preventive measure, the Federal Act on the International Transfer of Cultural Property (CPTA), which strengthened the control of the authorities over the art market in Switzerland, entered in effect on 1 June 2005.

Who Protects Our Cultural Heritage?
On the Importance of Art Dealers and Collectors for the Preservation of Ancient Cultural Goods

By Sylvia Furrer Hoffmann

The Debate

The Saleroom in the Cairo Museum where, until 1979, authentic objects could be purchased. Invoice of a licensed Egyptian art dealer, 1972.
Collecting and Conserving
The act of collecting is a major factor contributing to the conservation and study of cultural goods. Those who criminalise art dealers and collectors, mentioning them in the same breath with drug dealers, arms smugglers and human traffickers, should not be surprised, however, if they are no longer prepared to make the objects in their possession available for research or exhibitions.

Apart from ascertaining an object’s authenticity, an art dealer is required by law to meet specific due diligence obligations. Investigations into the provenance of the objects offered for sale are of crucial importance. In general, an art work is purchased either at auction, from another dealer or from private individuals. As a rule, most major auction houses and art dealers provide information on the provenance of the objects that they sell. When art works are purchased from private individuals, however, it is often necessary to have in-depth discussions in order to glean as much information as possible about an artefact and its history.

One recurrent problem is that collectors who wish to sell their art works are often no longer in possession of the original invoices and other pertinent documents. This does not, however, mean that these cultural goods must be regarded as “illicitly acquired”. There are many ways of reconstructing the history of an object and of proving that it was brought to Europe or to the USA many decades ago. Valuable information can, for instance, be provided by the way in which a piece was mounted or by certain, no longer current, methods of restoration which can be assigned to a specific period in history. Furthermore, a written declaration certified by a public notary can be required (to make a false statement would be a criminal offense).

Moreover, IADAA, which was founded in 1993, requires its members to adhere to a stringent code of conduct and of ethics. It is compulsory for all members to check all objects with a resale value of more than 5,000 euros with the Art Loss Register (ALR), a large database of lost and stolen art which actively cooperates with Interpol.

The principle of the presumption of innocence also holds true for the art market: Somebody who cannot provide a gap-free provenance is by no means necessarily a robber of cultural property. The Unesco Convention requires each country to draw up a list of its national cultural property. To date, Japan has done this in an exemplary manner. Japan has done this in an exemplary manner. To date, Japan has done this in an exemplary manner.

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Fanatical Iconoclasts
In addition to armed conflict and religious fanaticism, the greatest threat to cultural goods is posed by illegal settlements, real estate speculation, demographic pressure, problems with waste disposal, dam projects, corruption, cuts in public spending and paralyzing bureaucracy. Such grievances can already be encountered in our southern neighbouring country. The Unesco Convention of 1970 demands that states protect their archaeologi­cal sites from looting. There is no need for new laws; rather, the existing ones should be enforced effectively. History teaches us that cultural property was, in the past, most at risk from the territorial states themselves and the population at large (iconoclasm in the wake of the Reformation, ideologically motivated destruction by Stalin, Mao, Hitler, the Taliban and IS). We are convinced therefore, that the broad distribution of cultural goods is the most effective form of protection against its destruction.

Most collectors are deeply passionate about the objects they collect and have a great interest in the study and preservation of cultural goods. Indeed, most public museum collections have their origins in private collections. The Swiss Art Market Association believes that cultural goods should belong to those who are willing to take responsibility for them. With responsibility we mean: to provide optimum opportunities for scholarly research, to ensure the long-term conservation of the cultural goods and to make them accessible to the public.

The Swiss Art Market Association is of the opinion that this role need not necessarily be assigned to the territorial state as laid down in the Unesco Convention – especially not in those cases where the state does not have the financial means and the cultural and ideological maturity to fulfil its duties. Responsibility for cultural goods can be exercised just as well – sometimes even better – by private individuals.

Sylvia Furrer Hoffmann is the managing director of the Swiss Art Market Association. She studied law and economics and has extensive professional experience in the financial sector, fiduciary services, the financial supervision of state and canton and the insurance sector. In the course of her professional activities she has gained an insight into the functioning of all three political levels. Privately, she has had several managerial roles in cultural organisations specialising in the contemporary arts.

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The current debate about the size of the illicit market in cultural property and the alleged financing of IS with looted antiquities is mainly based on wild speculation. Before taking action the authorities should look at the facts, as this could prevent the wasting of limited law enforcement resources and the introduction of ineffective but draconian legislation like the most recent German law on cultural property.

Collecting and dealing in ancient art has been under attack in the media for some time now. A crucial distinction often overlooked in this public debate is the difference between legitimate trade and illicit trade. The failure to distinguish between the two has already led to poorly framed policies and regulations by NGOs and governments as the authorities react in haste to unsubstantiated speculation, rumour and propaganda in the wider media.

The “Multibillion Dollar Business”

The wider media have quoted the most bizarre figures for the size of the illicit market. Governments and their officials take these for granted, quoting them without question.

They also make little, if any, attempt to test their validity or ask where the figures come from. This “multibillion dollar business” has to be halted, officials shout from the rooftops, using the extreme exaggeration of the figures to reinforce the sense of urgency: claims of $2-3 billion have done the rounds, soon followed by $6-8 billion, with Der Spiegel going as high as $7-15 billion in August 2015, quoting UNESCO as its source, in order to give it credibility. However, when asked, UNESCO stated that it never quotes figures for the illicit market because it doesn’t know what they are, a response echoed by INTERPOL.

The truth is that nobody knows the size of the illicit market. So where did those alleged billions come from? IADAA asked Ivan Macquisten, a journalist, to find the primary source of the $2 billion claim that most seem to quote. He initially traced it back to a report from the year 2000, by Neil Brodie, Peter Watson and Jenny Dooley called “Stealing History: The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material”, which quoted the figure and gave as its source an article in The Independent.

To date, there is no evidence that the table-tops were used in the context of Christian cultic practices. As their decoration can be both Christian or pagan, these valuable items of furniture were probably used in a private context. Regardless of whether the reliefs illustrate a complex theological concept, serve to admonish the beholder to live a good, Christian life, or simply illustrate stories from Scripture, making them accessible to those who could not read: The guests seated at the table would certainly never have been at a loss what to talk about.

1 When, for instance, Constantia, half-sister of Emperor Constantine I, wrote to the church historian and Bishop of Caesarea Eusebius (ca 260-340) asking for an image of Christ, he refused her request in very harsh terms, pointing out that this would be a transgression of the second commandment of the Decalogue. MPG 20, 1545 fl.
3 On the water miracle and the question of who is represented, cf. Cat. Liebieghaus [as in caption to fig. 2] 200 ff.
newspaper, “Great sale of the century” by Geraldine Norman, dating back to 24 November 1990. It took Macquisten months to find a copy of that article and to his utter surprise, it gives no figure at all. Brodie now publicly regrets ever “quoting” the figure, but the harm is done.

So nobody knows the size of the illicit market; but what we do now know is the size of the legitimate market. IADAA conducted research into the size of the antiquities market in 2013: the combined sales figures of dealers and auction houses in the entire Western world. The result is a reliable figure of €150-200 million. So how can anyone extrapolate an illicit market worth multiple billions from that?

In the USA, the Antiquities Coalition (an opponent of the trade in ancient art) until recently quoted a figure of $7 billion as its estimate of what ISIS was raising annually from the illicit trade in antiquities. However, the cracks in this claim began to show earlier this year. Firstly, in March, Deborah Lehr, who chairs the Antiquities Coalition, was quoted in an article as admitting: “The biggest challenge in this field is that there’s no real information or statistics on the size of this illegal trade.”

Then, at a Chicago conference in May, a research project called MANTIS (Modelling the Antiquities Trade in Iraq and Syria), part funded by the Antiquities Coalition, announced some interesting initial conclusions. Dr Fiona Rose-Greenland, the post-doctoral research fellow at the University of Chicago in charge of the project, concluded: “ISIS is likely to have earned several million dollars in profit since launching its looting program... That’s a far cry from $7 billion.”

She attributed the grossly exaggerated figures in the order of billions to governments and other groups opposed to the Islamic State describing their actions in attention-grabbing terms. “It’s a lot easier to call for action against a $7 billion crime than a $4 million one,” she wrote.

Despite all the claims, so far nothing of any significance originating from the troubled region has been found or offered for sale in the traditional market centres of Europe or the USA. One expert who is not surprised by this is James McAndrew, who spent 27 years as a Senior Special Agent working at US Customs and the Department of Homeland Security, where he set up and developed the antiquities division, developing and implementing a national training programme titled “Fighting Illicit Traffic in Cultural Property at US Ports of Entry”. From him we know that in the ten or so years following the First and Second Gulf Wars, only three cases of confiscation of antiquities took place, all of them minor. “You will know when looted Syrian and Iraqi items are seized in the US,” he says, “because the authorities will go out of their way to give the seizures maximum publicity.”

Financing Terror with Junk?
It is fast becoming clear that the financing of terror with antiquities has been grossly exaggerated. On 5 December 2015 the New Yorker published a well-researched article about the raid in May 2015 on Abu Sayyaf, a high level commander of IS. The journalist Ben Taub asked Professor Rachael Goldman to appraise the confiscated antiquities. Her response: “What you are showing is sort of, like, junk,” (see illustrations). This was corroborated by a curator of ancient art from a prominent museum. Nevertheless, the FBI claimed this junk was an important haul of looted antiquities.

Vincent Geerling began collecting ancient art 40 years ago. In 1995, he decided to change his career and turned his hobby into his profession by founding Archea Ancient Art in Amsterdam. He has been a board member of the International Association of Dealers in Ancient Art (IADAA) for many years and its Chairman since 2013.
Jean-David Cahn on TEFAF and Archaeology

An Interview by Clément Thibault

CT: What do you think of this year’s TEFAF?
JDC: This fair is really dynamic. Several aspects have been worked on this year, especially with the arrival of new dealers. Today, TEFAF is undergoing a rejuvenation process and fine perspectives are in view with its launch of two new fairs in New York. This change was necessary. TEFAF is no longer a newcomer, but I think that the current period is promising. It will take a few years, but a dynamic has been triggered.

CT: What dynamic is that?
JDC: The fair is being updated and taking on a more global reach. Expertise is also returning to the foreground, with an absolutely extraordinary concentration of experts, especially for vetting. We wish to develop this potential for the public interest, beyond the business of presenting and selling work. Our ambition is to offer expertise on a wide scale.

CT: Is vetting one of the major priorities of TEFAF?
JDC: The strength of vetting lies in gathering a committee in which it’s possible to talk and debate openly with the aim of validating pieces and protecting the dealer offering them for sale. “The benefit goes to the public”: this is a major TEFAF principle. If any uncertainty surrounds a piece, we prefer to exclude it from the fair. These exclusions concern pieces whose authenticity is not entirely clear or those that have undergone too many successive restorations that have ultimately changed their nature.

CT: How is a vetting committee set up?
JDC: As for myself, I am the president of the antiquities committee. This allows me to reconcile my theoretical knowledge and my wide experience with objects. This also gives me the keys for approaching artworks vigorously and ethically. Vetting committees gather researchers — archaeology professors — and dealers, and we understand one another very well. Mainly because dealers are all trained in archaeology up to master’s or even doctoral level. We establish a dialogue between professionals who understand one another. This guarantees the analytical depth we owe to the public and to the object itself. Sometimes, we have detailed debates on fine points, for example on interpretation or on the attribution of a piece to such and such a period. The question of provenance is also raised — especially in the current context that turns this into an important question for today’s archaeology market.

CT: The current war in Syria and Iraq has placed the spotlight on the black market. What issues are raised by the black market today?
JDC: A few things can be noted. First, there is the issue of authenticity that we’ve just discussed. The Maastricht fair is the only one to offer a mobile lab placing at our disposal an X-ray generator, cutting-edge microscopes and other devices. These tools are made available to us by the Rijksmuseum Amsterdam and the University of Leiden in the Netherlands. When we see a piece whose patina looks suspicious, we can check it straight away using radiography or a microscopic examination. We can also detect the trace of rotating machines. The fair invests a lot of money and gives us the resources to do our work in optimal conditions. This is unique in the world.

Regarding the Middle East catastrophe and the pillaging of artworks, what astonishes me is that no pieces have reached the international market through the market hub. Even during the Gulf War, very few pieces made it to the international market. But the consequences are dramatic, the first being that art in this region globally loses value. The media doesn’t talk about this. Indeed, if a category of objects is pillaged or damaged, if it enters the black market, this affects the value of the legal pieces on the market.

And as an archaeologist, what I find unbearable is that this is a planned destruction...
aimed at destroying the roots of our Western societies. We are dealing with a nihilism that we haven't seen in Europe since the wave of iconoclasm in the wake of the Reformation and the French Revolution. There is very little protection of the countries affected by this destruction and I fear that the phenomenon will increase in coming years. Not for economic reasons, because everyone knows that an organisation such as Daesh gets its income from selling petroleum, and potassium. Big petroleum groups are the ones that finance Daesh and not the black market for archaeological works. It’s very difficult to divulse this type of information for political reasons. It’s easier to focus on the art market. But how do we explain that petroleum sold by Daesh passes through NATO-member countries?

When, in spite of everything, we see certain pieces entering the black market, they are only pieces of low value that are unable to support the activity of a criminal organisation. What I fear is certain pieces vanishing into markets that we don’t control at all, in certain Arab or Asian countries, but also Russian and ex-Soviet ones. It’s impossible to know what happens over there. In France, for example, before a piece is placed on sale, it is checked by different administrative bodies, particularly by tax officials, which back up the checking system. There are also pre-emptive rights enabling cultural authorities to oversee purchases and hence provenance. The archaeology market is the most controlled art market.

And I believe that it’s perfectly legitimate for society to demand that we should not deal in pillaged objects. No dealer should rejoice in this type of situation.

CT: *What are your gallery’s projects?*

JDC: I’m very interested in contemporary art, as a collector, but also through my family background. I’m involved in a project with the gallery of Jocelyn Wolff, a very dear friend, and we’re planning to produce an installation by Guillaume Leblon during Independent Brussels (April 2016). Guillaume Leblon will be presenting archaeological objects in dialogue with contemporary works. I’m delighted with this project because I think that it’s crucial not just to limit oneself to selling artworks. Taking artworks out of their contexts feeds reflection. Even if it is largely nihilist, contemporary art fascinates me.

CT: *We see more and more initiatives in this direction, with contemporary art blended with other art-history movements. What do you think of this trend?*

JDC: Most of the time, attempts to blend periods are superficial or two-dimensional. When we look at a contemporary artwork, the exhibition context is very important. If you change location, you change how an object is seen. It’s not enough to put objects from distant periods side by side; it’s necessary to consider the issue of location. It’s also necessary to bear in mind that as soon as contemporary art enters history, it’s no longer contemporary but modern. It’s important to distinguish the two.

CT: *In the case of statues or archaeology, we sometimes tend to forget that these objects were part of concrete practices and lifestyles. Today, we give them an entirely different status as that of an aesthetic object. How can an archaeologist convey all the complexity felt by a Christian before an idol or a Roman before a statue of Marcus Aurelius?*

JDC: This can only ever be partial. The question arises for any period that dates back a little, and in all domains of art. Our era is challenged. The archaeologist’s work consists in bearing in mind this distance while adopting a method and ethics that avoid falling into the subjective. At the same time, this subjective dimension is unavoidable because we are children of our times. The specificity of Roman archaeology is that it goes back to the source of our current Western society. We are not always aware of everything that we owe to these ancient societies that are so different from our own. Certain cultures have an oral tradition, others written. It’s part of the dealer’s job to be aware of the historical background needed to reconstitute the meaning of these objects in their original contexts. There is a multitude of dimensions that need to be taken into account in order to approach an object in the right way. This is the difficulty, and the richness, of this profession. As a dealer, you own a little fragment of time. It’s our responsibility to transmit it to the next person. This goes far beyond the commercial relationship. The art market is not just about an exchange of money, but the transmission of memory.

The media never talks about this aspect of our profession. It’s also thanks to the art market that a range of craft professions, under threat today, has survived.

The Long Afterlife of Greek Myths

By Peter Blome

Ever since ART Basel 2015 a monumental bronze of a nude woman has been standing in the garden of the Antikenmuseum Basel in full view of the public. Its connection with ancient art has nothing to do with either the creator or the style of the piece but solely with the theme, which is the myth of Daphne, the Greek nymph who was pursued by Apollo, and who metamorphosed into a laurel tree. Admittedly, not everyone passing by will look at the statue and instantly identify it as Daphne, given how idiosyncratically Markus Lüpertz has interpreted the subject. The woman depicted is miles away from the image of the chaste and graceful nymph familiar to us from Classical art and literature — the literary locus classicus being Ovid (Metamorphoses I,452 ff.). With proportions that are anything but organic, Lüpertz’s Daphne of 2003 is a provocation. Her bulging calves and trunk-like thighs support a very muscular torso. Her neck resembles that of a bull and her monstrous head is jerked savagely to the right. Nor do her facial features come anywhere close to the Classical ideal of beauty. Rather, her face is dominated by a bulbous nose and fleshy lips, which in a feminine touch are at least painted red.

To enable us to identify the nude figure as Daphne at all, Lüpertz provides a large laurel tree growing alongside her, though without actually touching her. Worst hit is Apollo, however, the fair and eternally youthful god of Greek legend who is here reduced to a pathetic head for Daphne to tread on. A crasser expression of the god’s defeat is scarcely imaginable. For while, in the myth itself, Daphne’s metamorphosis has the effect of denying Apollo satisfaction, at least he remains the slim, perfectly god-like being he always was. Lüpertz reads the tale differently, as the story of a strong woman who triumphs by breaking Apollo’s divine power. And whether this Daphne really is forever transformed remains a moot point; she certainly does not become a tree; her metamorphosis, it seems, is secondary.

Yet the transformation of the self is at the heart of this and countless other such myths. Ancient representations of Daphne even show branches growing out of her body. We owe the greatest interpretation of the myth not to Antiquity, however, but to Gian Lorenzo Bernini, the sculpting genius who created his own marble Daphne group for his patron, Cardinal Scipio Borghese, in 1622. Bernini’s Apollo is so fleet of foot as to be almost floating in his pursuit of the graceful nymph, even as she metamorphoses beyond his reach. The transfiguration of her fingers and toes into laurel twigs and the contrast thus generated between the leafy branches and her immaculately smooth body is among the best that Western art has to offer. Bernini overcame the limits of his materials as did no other. At his hands, even the hardest marble might become flesh, foliage or bark.

The point of this account of how the Daphne myth has developed from Antiquity to the Baroque period to the 21st century is to show not just that Greek myth has a long afterlife, but also — an even more important point, perhaps — that it can be constantly re-interpreted. This is why exhibitions that follow the development of a given theme over two or more millennia are such worthwhile undertakings. I remember well the exhibition called Homer. The Myth of Troy in Poetry and Art at the Antikenmuseum Basel in 2008. From a Mycenaean boar’s tusk helmet to Signor Polke’s Dream of Menelau.s, from the reception of Homer in the Greek tragedies to Homer in the cinema, the exhibition covered a three-thousand-year period, unfurling a superb panorama of European literary and art history. For surely the loftiest mission of them all for a museum is to shed new light on the past by viewing it through the mirror of all subsequent periods. Seen in this way, the rather violent-looking Daphne in front of the Antikenmuseum is a most welcome modern metamorphosis of a very ancient matter.

My Choice

A Bronze Arm of a Child

By Ulrike Haase

Looking at this finely modelled bronze-fragment of a lower arm, the viewer is bound to ask to whom it might once have belonged – that tiny hand with chubby, vigorously splayed fingers, impulsively clutching at thin air, which as far as we know is now the only remaining pointer to the appearance and character of the whole.

This highly unusual fragment must have belonged to a life-size statue of a child, and in terms of pose and expression it recalls two magnificent bronzes (undoubtedly made as a pair) each of a little girl chasing a partridge, which not so long ago were sold at auction in New York. Statues of children, especially together with animals, can be found as early as the 5th century B.C., when they were used primarily in sacred or sepulchral contexts. In the Hellenistic Period, however, we can observe a move away from the idealizing thrust of classical norms, and an increased emphasis on the individual, the special, and even the imperfect. The representations of people, and children in particular, become more varied and more like “snapshots,” full of vitality. One vivid example of this is the Goose Strangler, a now lost bronze sculpture of the 3rd century B.C., which is known to us only from Roman marble copies and is generally interpreted as a votive offering. In Roman times, these Hellenistic genre figures and figural groups underwent a change of function, serving as decorative elements in luxurious villas and gardens, such as are familiar to us from Pompeii or Herculaneum. That our fragment, too, once belonged to such a context is a plausible – and very pleasing – thought.

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If, following Herodotus, we understand “history” to mean the inquiry into “human achievements” (and sufferings), then archaeology, being concerned with the material remains of those achievements, is first and foremost a special field within the same discipline. Of course it has now become much broader in scope. Having focused initially on all things spectacular – temples, palaces, art objects – archaeologists these days are more interested in, for instance, the development of crafts, domestic animals and crops, studied with scientific exactitude.

For historians, however, it is the written sources that remain paramount, whose very existence marks the boundary between “prehistory” and “protohistory”. A good example of the latter are the Celts and Germanic tribes whose history we know only from “outsiders”, specifically from Greek and Latin sources. In the absence of any written sources the ruins of Great Zimbabwe and the graves of the Celtic princes (Glauberg, Hochdorf, Vix) remain forever silent, for all their splendour.

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona multi – “Many brave men lived before Agamemnon” Horace reminds us (Carmina, 4.9.25–26); yet we know nothing of them because “they lack a sacred poet”.

In that particular instance, Heinrich Schliemann’s excavations in Troy and Mycenae, and those of other archaeologists in Knossos and Pylos, did indeed unearth a world “before”, and contemporaneous with, Agamemnon – the world now known to us as the Minoan-Mycenaean Age, which thanks to the deciphering of the Linear B tablets has begun speaking to us. It was archaeologists, moreover, who found the “World of Odysseus” in the Geometric Period of the 9th/8th century B.C. and with it the true age of Homer – albeit one in which memories of a glorious Mycenaean past lived on.

This was the world of the nobility, whose competitiveness and passion for sports, leisurely banquets (symposia) and cult of the dead are familiar to us not only from the Homeric epics and the works of the first poets (Archilochos, Alcaeus, Sappho), but also – in colour! – from the fine arts and countless vase paintings. An example: Before Odysseus wreaks revenge on the suitors, he and Telemachus first have to take down their helmets, shields and spears from the walls of the megaron in which they customarily dine (Odyssey, 19, 31–33). And it is those same items adorning the wall of a banquetting hall (Frg. 140 V) that Alcaeus invokes to inspire his fellow symposiasts to take up arms against the tyrant: “The vast room gleams with bronze … with sheen of casques … Bright greaves of bronze … new-made linen vests and hollow shields … along with swordblades from Chalkis …” (trans. Anne Pippin Burnett).

Yet only archaeology could render such banquetting halls visible. Similarly magnificent interiors, festooned with arms and other artefacts, were typically prepared for deceased Etruscan nobles as late as the 4th century, as the Tomba dei Relievi in Cerveteri (Caere) and some of the tombs in Tarquinia such as the Tomba Giglioli and the Tomba degli Scudi show. Alcaeus could have sung his poems right there – albeit while partaking of the funeral feast.

The custom of adorning noble houses with arms survived even longer in Rome, where many of the weapons on display were war booty seized from defeated enemies. In the year 121 B.C., for example, M. Fulvius Flac-

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Inscribed bronze breastplate, seized as booty in Falerni, 241 B.C. Malibu, The J. Paul Getty Museum L.80. AC.37

Tomba dei Relievi with stucco decoration. Banditaccia necropolis, Cerveteri. 3rd quarter of 4th century B.C.
cus of the party of Gaius Gracchus armed his followers for the last desperate battle against Consul L. Opimius and the Senate using weapons from his triumph against the Ligurians, Vocontii and Salluvii in 123 B.C., which since then he had kept in his own home (Plutarch, Life of Caius Gracchus, 15).

In the absence of an archaeological context, however, it is impossible to say where the bronze breastplate that turned up as an anonymous loan to the J. Paul Getty Museum in 1986 was originally displayed. Its inscription names the two consuls of the year 241 B.C., Q. Lutatius and A. Manlius, and identifies it as booty seized from the Falisci at Falerii, which the said consuls had just conquered. As it was made in the 4th century, however, it might already have been on display in a noble house at Falerii – perhaps even then a war trophy? – and to judge by its good state of preservation was furnished with the inscription only before being placed in the tomb of its new owner.

The grave goods found in the tombs of the Celtic princes, among them the monumental Vix Krater, also take us back to the aristocratic symposium culture of the Mediterranean and the costly artefacts to which it gave rise. What would we give to know the stories that were told and the poems that were sung at the courts of these princes!

This Celtic longsword from the Middle to Late La Tène Period is a masterpiece of the art of metalwork. The blade and tang were forged from a single piece of iron. I am entranced by the elegance and precision of the stippled decoration with which the blacksmith adorned the double-edged blade: a band of flat, alternating triangles runs along each of the fullers flanking the raised central ridge. Towards the tip of the sword, the triangles give way to a delicate linear pattern resembling the twigs of a tree. Such stylized vegetal designs are typical of the La Tène Period.

The elegantly curved element at the end of the blade is notched on one side and was forged separately. It is highly unusual and most impressive that the pommel is crafted in the shape of a Celtic helmet adorned with triangles and peltae inlaid with red enamel. These are reminiscent of the famous helmet of Amfreville (4th cent. B.C.). The Celts greatly favoured the combination of iron and enamel for their luxury weapons, a marriage of materials that in turn inspired Roman craftsmen, especially makers of fibulae.

The nicks on the cutting edges of the blade testify to the sword’s actual use in battle. The blade narrows sharply at the tip, indicating that it was used not only to slash but also to stab. This comes as a surprise, as the Celts generally fought on horseback, wielding their swords in expansive, slashing movements. Julius Caesar mentions this method of swordsmanship in his description of the Battle of Bibracte. It is not possible to stab from the back of a moving horse, as the rider would be thrown off his steed.

Having spent many years studying weapons, I never cease to be amazed by the technical perfection of Celtic weapons, which in many aspects surpasses that of those produced by the Greeks and Romans. The sword presented here, too, is perfectly balanced and superbly formed.

Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg studied History and Latin in Munich and Freiburg im Breisgau. He habilitated in 1974 at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg with a thesis on Capua in the Second Punic War, focussing on Roman annalistics. From 1978-2007 he was Professor of Ancient History at the University of Basel. Jürgen von Ungern-Sternberg is Honorary Professor of the Universities of Haute Alsace (2000), Riga (2002), and Tartu (2005). His research interests include the Roman Republic, Baltic History and the History of Science. Furthermore, he was co-editor of the Griechische Kulturgeschichte in the new Jacob Burckhardt Edition.
J.D. Beazley (1885–1970), the pre-eminent Oxford don who did more than any other scholar worldwide to further the classification of black- and red-figure Attic vases and the individual painters behind them, needs no further introduction here. Indeed, he remains the indisputable authority on this subject to this day. If, in addition to the standard works (ABV, ARV etc.) we also read the essays in which Beazley explains the basic research he was engaged in, we soon notice how extraordinarily well read in ancient literature he was. His first academic post was that of Classics tutor at Christ Church College, Oxford, which is why even now, Classicists quite rightly claim him as one of their own.

A good example of his philological competence is the essay published in the Proceedings of the British Academy as Ἑλένης ἀπαίτησις. Used mainly in epic studies, this Greek term meaning the “demand for Helen’s return” describes the mission that the Greeks dispatched into the city of Troy shortly after landing there to demand Helen’s return. Had the Trojans complied with that demand, there would have been no Trojan War. In his essay, Beazley explores not just the iconographical aspects of this episode in Greek art – taking as an example a magnificent Corinthian krater (Vatican 35’525, Astarita Collection 525) – but with no less profundity its literary aspects, too. After all, the episode predates the period covered by Homer’s Iliad, as we know it today, which begins only in the tenth year of the war and recounts the events of just 51 days. In the eighth and seventh centuries B.C., however, the Trojan War in its entirety was the theme of numerous epic songs, some of which are at least known to us by name: the Kypria, for example, was about the beginning of the war, whereas the Iliopersis and Little Iliad were concerned with its end. Their content has to be painstakingly reconstructed from quotes, references and the plot summaries drawn up by the authors of Late Antiquity. Beazley was familiar with all these sources and hence was able to deliver plausible explanations of the scenes and characters on the Astarita Krater.

And he was able to link the two, the vase-paintings and the literature, because the figures on the vases are labelled. Beazley studied these vase inscriptions very carefully, as is evident from Some Inscriptions on Vases (I–VIII), a series of eight essays published at intervals between 1927 and 1960 in the American Journal of Archaeology. But vase inscriptions play an important role in his other publications, too. Without them, we would know neither the names of the potters and painters nor the kalos names, and many of the mythological scenes would have continued to elude interpretation.

When it comes to inscriptions, scholars need not just a grounding in the literary points of reference, but linguistic skills as well. Close attention to the dialect forms and writing on the vases yields findings that could not be obtained in any other way. Thus the “collo-
quial” language style, which for ancient Athens is nowhere more visibly in evidence than on the vases, is well-known. The philological evidence that the vase-painters were indeed influenced by works of literature has stimulated new lines of inquiry in recent years. On the aforementioned Astarita Krater, for example, the name Menelaus (who, as might be expected, was part of the mission to demand back Helen) is written with a surprising digamma: Μενέλᾱϝος, which attests to just such an influence. Such observations are especially instructive on Attic vases, where the appearance of Doric name-forms between ca. 540 and 450 B.C. makes it probable that choral-lyric poems or tragedies were indeed a source of inspiration for the vase painters (figs. 1–2). Thus archaeology has profited from philology and linguistics, just as the opposite is also true.

1 PBA 43 (1957), 233–244.
2 He could at most have looked more closely at the “nurse” (τροφός); see the author’s work, Non-Attic Greek Vase Inscriptions, Oxford 2001, 83–85 and 303f.
3 Drawing mainly on Beazley’s research, Henry R. Immerwahr (1916–2013) amassed a vast collection of data on Attic vase inscriptions, which the author and his team have made available online at http://avi.unibas.ch/.
4 The pioneering work here was Paul Kretschmer, Die griechischen Vaseninschriften ihrer Sprache nach untersucht, Gütersloh 1894.
5 See the author, op. cit. in note 2, 84 and 336–340.

Amongst the artworks that I have acquired recently for my gallery stock, I particularly admire a bronze statuette of Pan. The horned shepherd god stands with his legs crossed, playing on his flute with both hands. Viewed in profile, the undulating line of his softly modelled body is especially striking where the muscular, human thorax narrows drastically to the prominent buttocks, which in their turn transition into the elegantly curved goat’s legs, whose animalistic character is further emphasized by the finely incised fur. Viewed from the front, the statuette is no less charming. Only on closer inspection does the viewer notice the subtle shift in the individual body axes, thanks to which this standing motif loses much of its static quality. Meticulously worked details such as the grooved horns, the fine strands of shoulder-length hair, the furred belly and pubis and not least the intricacy of the face, whose bushy eyebrows, eyes framed by large eyelids, a slightly knobbly nose and wide mouth underscore the outstanding quality of this highly unusual bronze. The motif of a figure standing with crossed legs, moreover, is extremely rare and the dark green patina is excellently preserved.

This fine statuette is not only remarkable for its artistic quality, but also because of the iconographic and cultural context to which it refers. The bucolic, Hellenistic bronze represents Pan as a sashaying, peaceful, flute-playing shepherd-god, and not as a protective deity. Nonetheless, Pan was the protector of the Attic fleet and a festival was celebrated in his honour in Athens. Furthermore, on occasion, the Kings of Macedonia represented themselves as Pan. Thus, many different aspects of ancient Greek culture become tangible in this exquisite statuette.
The day-to-day routine of university life can occasionally be stimulating – when debates open up, for instance on study trips with students. In addition to informal, personal conversations, and the scholarly discussions when viewing the exhibits, it is often the fortuitous finds that provide food for thought.

The three days in late February 2015, which I spent in The Netherlands with students from the University of Freiburg, were densely packed, but nonetheless, a couple of hours remained at our free disposal. Many of us were attracted by the “Late Rembrandt” exhibition in the Amsterdam Rijksmuseum, whilst the important permanent collection was viewed rather cursorily. There, I chanced to notice a painting by the Dutch artist George Jacobus Johannes van Os (1782–1861): “Still Life with Flowers in a Greek Vase: Allegory of Spring”.

The colourful bouquet in this painting is indeed impressive: red shrub roses and daylilies vie with Rhododendron Praecox, white mountain-laurel (Kalmia latifolia), St. John’s wort, tufted pansies and gypsophila – my florist confirmed their absolutely realistic representation. The flowers are nonchalantly placed in an evidently ancient Greek vase. It seems as if the artist himself arranged them. The vase, too, is not imagined, but real. It is an Attic red-figure column-krater of the High Classical Period, and was created in ca. 440 B.C. On the left of the picture zone we see a naked youth wearing a laurel wreath in his hair, leading a bull by the horn, and swinging a cudgel above his head. On the right, an agitated woman, her head turned back and her hands (which originally held attributes) raised, hastens to right. The image undoubtedly shows Theseus catching the bull of Marathon and driving it to Athens, where he will sacrifice this beast of Cretan origin, which had wreaked havoc on the plain of Marathon. The complex mythical constructions devised by the Athenians had turned Theseus into an Attic national hero and given him a place in the series of kings of the days of old, thus making him a model of vigour for the youth of Athens. Incidentally, the rather unspectacular reverse of this vessel shows three stereotypical young men – ephebes with staff and cloak. As they are precisely the main group targeted by the “message” of the renewed myth of Theseus, a subtle relationship is created between the two sides of the vase.

But what do we know about the painter of the canvas? George van Os was part of a family of artists. His father, Jan, was a poet and painter. He won his first art prize in Amsterdam, and in 1812 he won the gold medal at the Paris Salon. He was born in Den Haag in 1782; in 1809 he won the gold medal at the Paris Salon. His flair for detailed representations brought him fame in France, where, as of 1827, he found long-term employment as a porcelain painter in the royal factory in Sèvres. Thus, one does not have to search far to find the current repository of the krater: it is located in the Musée National de Céramique de Sèvres. It was published in 1994 in the Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae (LIMC) and already in 1934 in the Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum (CVA), and for the first time in a book with engravings of...
ancient vases by Du bois-Maisonouvre, which appeared in several installments starting in 1817 and spanning two decades. Here, as in the painting by van Os, the vessel appears intact, whilst in the CVA damage (incurred in the meantime?) is clearly visible: surface losses and cracks; the vessel is clearly (again?) reassembled from fragments.

The low inventory number (inv. 3) indicates that the object belongs to the oldest holdings of the museum, the “Collection Denon”. The art expert Dominique-Vivant Denon, who advised Napoleon on his confiscations and served, from 1802, as head of the Musée Napoléon (the future Louvre), was himself a collector. As of 1778, he held various offices in Naples, where he met the eminent collector of Greek vases, William Hamilton, and succeeded in building up his own impressive collection of ancient vases. These were later acquired by Sèvres to form the core of the museum’s collection.

And what are we left with at the end? Just an amusing observation on a minor detail? Perhaps there is more it, after all. There is hardly any secondary literature on the oeuvre of George van Os. It would, however, surely be a rewarding field for research, given his remarkable vita and his close liens to the royal factory as well as to the museum of Sèvres, whose collection served as a source of inspiration and pictorial motifs for him. In view of the fact that similar references to ancient pottery, which van Os could see on a daily basis in Sèvres, abound in his paintings, the result of such a study would certainly be a valuable contribution to our knowledge on the reception of Antiquity. Thus, “debate” arises: a Greek krater is “found again”; it is not located on the art market, no, but its relevance as a museum-piece gains a new significance; its “history” acquires an additional dimension – thanks to a glance across the borders between disciplines. This is something we should focus on learning more intensively.

Perhaps because I am an archaeologist at heart, the objects with the greatest power to captivate me are those that do not reveal the full extent of their character and beauty at first glance.

Patience and sensitivity are required of anyone wishing to properly appreciate the subtle modelling of this torso of a young woman, clad in chiton and himation. Viewed from the front, the work’s most striking aspects are the slenderess of the torso, whose lateral contours, clearly visible underneath the drapery, make for a charming contrast with the rather broad shoulders; next the right arm, set slightly apart from the body as an ingeniously asymmetrical element in a work that in all other respects adheres rigorously to the anterior central axis; then the greatly reduced volume of the body when viewed in profile; the accumulation of finely modelled folds sheathing the back; the long hair which, to judge by what remains of it, was originally divided into numerous rows of curls, whose strictly horizontal ends fittingly emphasize the axial system on which the composition is based; and then finally, the pleated hem of the himation emerging from underneath the mass of curls at the back and sweeping under the left arm to the front, where, logically, it was worn diagonally over the breast right up to the shoulder.

Archaic marbles are very rarely found on the art market and, over the centuries, have managed to retain more or less of their original appearance. So surely it is only right and proper that we give them our attention at least for a fraction of the time they themselves have endured.

My Choice

An Archaic Kore

By Ulrike Haase

Carn’s Quarterly 2/2015
On Toxicity

By Marc Fehlmann

Marc Fehlmann next to a painting by Jean-Pierre Saint-Denis (1752 - 1809): Germanic Marriage, 1788, oil on canvas, 136.5 x 259 cm, Museum Oskar Reinhart, Inv. no. 702.

Marc Fehlmann studied Classical Archaeology and History of Art at the Universities of Basle and Zurich, graduated with a MA in Museum Studies at the Courtauld Institute of Art (UCL) in London and received his doctorate in Zurich in 1998.

From 1999-2004 he was curator at the Museum of Fine Arts Berne, thereafter he was Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeology and Art History of the Eastern Mediterranean University in Famagusta, North Cyprus, where he was also concerned with Art Law and the problem of illegal archaeological excavations. He was a Senior Fellow at the College Budapest and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts in London. Since May 2012 he is director of the Museum Oskar Reinhart in Winterthur.

David Cahn and I have known each other since our youth. Our first “transaction” took place in 1978, when I traded some Roman bronze coins that I had been given by my grandmother for three Greek gold leaves from a funerary wreath in David’s collection. Later, I studied at Zurich University under Professor Hans Peter Isler, who made his students realise what harm an unregulated, illicit trade in antiquities could do to the archaeological record. By the time I graduated, I had become a fervent critic of such an illicit trade, and in 1998, I even organised a conference on the UNESCO and the UNIDROIT convention at Zurich University, timed to coincide with the Swiss government’s efforts to develop new regulations for the art market. I invited David to come and defend the position of the dealer, and we spent tense hours discussing and quarrelling about regulations for dealers and museums alike.

We both had to accept that times had changed since the “golden age” of Dikran Kelekian, Hagob Kevorkian, Jacob Hirsch, Mathias Komin and Georges Zakos, all of whom prospered in a world where export regulations were barely enforced. We also regretted that, in the 1990’s, the traditional bonds between academics, dealers, collectors and museum curators were dwindling away. Given his family background, this was obviously more painful for David than for me, but we both agreed that since the 1970’s a new breed of dealers and collectors had taken a lot of the fun out of the trade. Their hedge-fund managers’ attitude had contaminated the market, and as a consequence, dealers and collectors found themselves universally blamed for everything that had gone wrong in the trade. Furthermore, with a delay of a generation, the 1970 UNESCO convention has thrown up an iron wall behind which no antiquity without pre-1970 documentation is considered “legitimate” or worthy of scholarly attention.

Having had the privilege of inheriting a small group of antiquities with a pre-1970 history, I know only too well about the difficulties of missing documentation. My grandparents never kept an invoice of anything they bought, whether it was a painting that had passed through the hands of Ernst Beyeler, or antiquities. This appears to have been quite common among minor collectors for some time, and I could only “remedy” the situation by reconstructing probabilities – or better, by finding solid data through my own research in old auction and dealer’s catalogues. I soon began to add documented pieces that once were owned by Lord Elgin, Ernst Pfahl, and Jacob Hirsch, among others. I prefer such objects not just because they are out of the post-1970 “danger zone” as determined by UNESCO, which some detractors claim to be totally infested with toxic material, but because I take a fundamental interest in the modern history of an archaeological object or a work of art.

As the director of Switzerland’s oldest collector’s museum, I naturally have a professional as well as moral obligation to conduct due diligence before acquiring a piece for my private enjoyment. Within the sphere of the fine arts, museums, collectors and dealers are likewise faced with provenance issues of a consequential nature, in particular regarding works looted or otherwise acquired during the Nazi era. Yet not everybody has the know-how, time or resources to check thoroughly the legal status or history of ownership of a piece prior to its acquisition. But this begs the question of what society considers to be “legal” and “morally acceptable”, and what price this same society is willing to pay for it.

The looting of the National Museum in Baghdad in 2003, the conviction of Giacomo Medici in 2004, and the more terrifying destruction of archaeological sites from Syria to Afghanistan and beyond have undoubtedly heightened public awareness of the danger posed by such activities to the world’s common cultural heritage. Ethical considerations aside, the legal consequences and financial risks involved in trafficking stolen artefacts seem sufficient to dissuade reputable dealers from getting their hands dirty. However, given the already huge and constantly increasing demand for archaeological material from classical regions, fuelled both by individuals and new museums in new markets, the prospect of any diminution in collecting activity seems remote.

Fortunately, some dealers and auction houses who understand their responsibilities, as well as collectors and museum curators, have developed a taste for works that have a documented history before 1970. This has led to a steep rise in prices for exceptional pieces, since an incontestable history of ownership now carries its own price tag. Museum officials and private collectors might deplore this, but you can’t have it both ways. Furthermore, these developments are still moderate compared to the staggering $1.66 billion spent on contemporary art in four days of auctions in New York last November!

All the same, there are still a lot of players in the market contaminating the efforts of those who do their best to offer antiquities with spotless histories. The bad guys will always be around as long as the social fabric of the western world remains unchanged, and until a much larger political and economic shift takes place on a global scale. Hence the looting and wanton destruction of archaeological sites will not stop when I give up collecting or when responsible dealers cease trading. It is also a fallacy to believe that tougher export restrictions and draconian laws in so-called “source countries” will dissuade collectors and slow down the market, because our western conception of...
what might be considered “legal” and “morally acceptable” does not apply everywhere.

I myself worked for four years in a so-called “source country”, Cyprus, where I experienced at first hand the local authorities and foreign missions dealing with the problem of illicit excavations. I also have friends working in Turkey who lament not just the problem of looting but also the sheer volume of confiscated stolen artefacts, which causes storage problems that no one has the time or the funds to handle. Hence I came to the conclusion that a licensed market, a market regulated by government authorities, as was the case in Cyprus until 1996, might be worth a try. The Cypriot Antiquities Law of 1935 and its later amendments signified an attempt to address and reduce the threat posed by illegal excavations, namely by legalising “chance finds” and previously looted antiquities. This at least resulted in a government-controlled supply of government-licensed antiquities to a government-sanctioned market. It also encouraged accidental discoveries to be brought to the attention of the Cypriot Department of Antiquities, which either bought them or, if it judged the material “surplus to requirements”, issued the finder with a document that licensed him or her to keep or sell them. Another advantage of this law was that it produced a solid paper trail as every item was furnished with at least two sets of receipts which recorded the place and date of its discovery, one for the Department of Antiquities and the other for the finder and/or licensed collector and dealer. Information about an object’s find spot and context was thus recorded for scholarly research (even if in a very pragmatic way), while transfer of ownership and even export were made possible.

Let me draw a comparison with the drugs trade in my own country, Switzerland. The situation here has improved only since the 1990’s, with the implementation of state regulations on heroin use (although we are still waiting for the legalisation of cannabis). It is a truism that this stopped neither the consumption nor the production and smuggling of opiates, but it reduced the level of illicit trade on the streets and made a drastic impact on uncontrolled consumption of low-grade material. Surely, positive results of a similar kind can be expected from a properly regulated antiquities market in “source countries”, even if we accept the inevitable side effects caused by corruption. The sanctioned sale of looted and intercepted material that is not of outstanding scientific or aesthetic importance might, after it has been properly recorded, help to generate desperately needed funds for archaeological research and conservation work in so-called “source countries”, and even produce new jobs for hundreds or indeed thousands of young archaeologists who face unemployment when leaving university.

We cannot change human nature, with its greed, ignorance and misplaced urge to “discover”. But we can at least support those dealers who work hard to improve standards of due diligence and who take great care not to acquire freshly sourced material. It does not help to vilify the art market, museums and private collectors en masse in blogs and via the media. On the other hand, it might help increase the appeal of dealing in and collecting only pieces with a solid history of ownership if buying looted material found itself loudly and publicly tarred with the same anti-social brush as illicit drug consumption, and if acquiring pieces with a clear title conveyed palpable prestige. If we can reach this stage, we may yet be able to change consumer behaviour. In addition, one should allow reputable dealers and the few respectable auction houses access to the archives of convicted smugglers and dealers in Italy and Greece, as part of their due diligence procedures. If two academics with privileged access to these archives police the market, and proceed to cause an uproar and a scandal when they identify a toxic piece in a sale, it might satisfy their own vanity and lend politicians in their circle a “morally sound” cachet, but it does not, however, make looted antiquities go away, or even prevent looting at all.

Until then, we – the collectors – must do our bit towards minimising looting by not buying on eBay or from dealers with dodgy stock. We should buy only from dealers we can trust, in the same way as we would trust our lawyer or dentist. We should also be patient and willing to wait until a piece with a verified or highly probable history of ownership turns up – and likewise be willing to pay for it! Bargains are not to be expected in a luxury market. We may also expect that the debate over collecting antiquities will continue while people will always collect, and others will always loot, whatever the reason.
Excavations
Tackling the Challenge of Unpublished

By Jack Ogden

Dr Jack Ogden is a specialist in the materials and technology of ancient gold jewellery. He holds a doctorate from the University of Durham with a thesis on gold jewellery in Ptolemaic and Roman Egypt and recently was awarded a diploma with distinction from the Institute of Art Law. He is an elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London, an elected Fellow and Honorary Life Member of the Gemmological Association of Great Britain, a former committee member of the Egypt Exploration Society and served on the UK Government Treasure Committee for fourteen years, latterly as vice-chairman. He has written several books and numerous articles on his subject and lectured worldwide. He is shown here making a preliminary examination of an object in the Staffordshire Treasure while on the Treasure Valuation Committee in 2009.

In previous issues of this Newsletter, Sir John Boardman and Professor Andreas Furtwängler have eloquently pointed out the problems of unpublished excavations and some of the reasons why they are unpublished. These reasons can usually be traced to a scarcity of time, money and other resources. But there are other factors woven in such as possessive attitudes to digs and finds, and excavators who prefer to dig than publish what they dig up.

If we accept that archaeological best practice means satisfactory and timely publication of excavations, and recognise that the barriers to achieving this are generally a matter of money or attitude or both, we need to consider how things can be improved. How can we best catch up on our past shortcomings, and how can we best ensure things are better in the future?

Trying to play catch-up is admirable, but only a fraction of the unpublished excavations from the past will ever be comprehensively published now. Even if funding was available, original excavation notes can be sketchy if they are available at all, there might be minimal photos or drawings, and sometimes even the finds are impossible to locate or identify with confidence. Steps are being taken. For example there is the commendable “Artefacts of Excavation” project being led by Dr Alice Stevenson at University College London and Professor John Baines at the University of Oxford which aims to create an online resource covering the thousands of objects from British excavations in Egypt between the 1880s and 1980s. These were distributed to some 200 museums worldwide before they were fully documented or published. It is hoped that this work will inspire other such projects around the world. Modern technology and communications make such projects far more feasible now than they would have been even a decade ago.

Of course, there is the problem of moving goalposts. Many of the finds being collated in the “Artefacts of Excavation” project were excavated by the grandfather of Egyptology, Sir W.M. Flinders Petrie and published by him in what were for his time exemplary examples of archaeological publication. Just because excavations were published in the past doesn’t mean that they will keep archaeologists happy today. Sir John Boardman mentioned Sir Leonard Woolley’s brief publication of his excavations at Al Mina in Turkey in the 1930s as another example where past publication wouldn’t meet modern expectations.

With current excavations, publication is easiest to manage if it is taken in two stages. The initial step in the publication of an excavation should be a solid description and photographic record of the site and what was found there, with plans, measurements and so on. Such information could then be disseminated as quickly and as widely as possible through online databases – even during the course of the excavation. It can be as fast and simple as uploading holiday photos to Facebook. Such information could be amended and updated as work progressed.

Next come the detailed study and publication of individual aspects of the excavation bringing in the most appropriate specialists that can be obtained with the resources available. This stage is necessarily an on-going one. Online publication means that you don’t have to wait for some tardy specialist to submit their chapter before the book is sent off the printer. Indeed, the specialist reports would be integrated or closely linked with the online database generated by the preliminary stage. In cases where libraries or attitudes require hard copy, print on demand is an easy and universal answer.

Neither egos nor nationalism should derail archaeological best interest. But, however petty and selfish these may seem, they often do. The purpose of excavation – now anyway – is not to fill museums with trophies or shower excava-

The sheer number of finds from excavations can be daunting. Here is just one of the bays of shelves containing excavated pottery fragments in a local Greek museum. Photo Jack Ogden
tors with accolades. It is wisdom not weakness to seek specialist help from around the globe. Archaeologists sans frontières. Making finds accessible, in reality or digitally, to an international body of scholars will help encourage specialist participation, some voluntary, and maybe attract funding. It may also lead to new approaches or ideas that the excavator might never have considered.

To make all this work smoothly we need to encourage young archaeologists to gain experience in handling and looking at objects. We might question the need for much new excavation, but there will always be some. So, while there is a place for DPhil theses on such topics as “Gender Identity in Middle Kingdom Aswan”, we also need graduates who see the importance of being able to understand and describe objects and their materials. Many museums are doing a good job, but some still need to see beyond income generation and the education and entertainment of the masses, however worthy, and grasp their academic responsibilities with regard to researching and publishing their holdings – particularly objects from past excavations.

A quarter of a century ago I was doing some research in Northern India and was introduced to an elderly man who had incredible knowledge about local traditional jewellery – localities, manufacture, ownership and so on. I asked if he had published or planned to publish this. No. Could I spend some time with him, discuss the subject and take notes? No. When I asked him why he was so against sharing his knowledge with others, his reply was that it had taken him a lifetime to amass such knowledge, so why should he make it easy for someone else.

A cautionary tale for all historians and archaeologists. The dissemination of information is the lifeblood, indeed purpose, of our subject.
In his contribution to the question of why much information about excavations and finds has never been published, Sir John Boardman very convincingly presented the main reasons leading to this state of affairs (CQ 2/2014). He concludes his argument with the observation that informative facts can be gleaned from finds that are not particularly impressive and that this material is “sometimes not worthy of display but of extreme historical and archaeological importance”. Here, the question arises as to what the opinion is of a field archaeologist who is active today. I am such an archaeologist, and so, let us suppose that I can provide convincing reasons to carry out an excavation, and that the authorities support my cause. Now, my finances are only sufficient to fund the campaign itself. And if I cannot present any spectacular finds or prestigious objects, which can be published in advance, and I have “only” findings that make new historical inferences possible, my project is often not destined for a bright future. For, in consequence, the staff and funding allotted to my project remain very limited.

My experience has shown that it is very rarely possible to present in detail material that is not spectacular, but nonetheless of importance. Even if the larger historical context is set forth, it is nowadays a much more protracted endeavour to produce a detailed “catalogue raisonné”; the comparisons have become more numerous, as has the secondary literature. Thus, individual groups of material can only sporadically be given to students for their theses, allowing at least a part of the finds to be saved from oblivion.

To this day, honourable institutions such as the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, which have existed since the 19th century, run classical excavations that are endowed with considerable funds; I think, for instance, of Olympia, Delos, Pergamon, Didyma etc. Often, however, the reasons for keeping these renowned sites are political rather than scholarly. A lack of suitable scholars, the problem of short-term contracts, which make it impossible for employees to have a decent livelihood, but also the incidence of staff-members who leave the team, often prevent the adequate presentation of finds and findings that have been hoarded for years. Restoration work has become increasingly prioritised. Can one improve this situation, or does one have to accept it as symptomatic of our times?

These are, to my mind, developments, the import of which it is hard to assess. The “Bildungsbürger” of the late 19th and 20th centuries, who belonged to the intellectual and economic upper bourgeoisie, and whose relationship to classical antiquity was still un-
broken, has given way to the interested world
citizen of our globalized society. The subject
“Classical Antiquity” – to mention just one
example – has to economise, for instance,
at our universities (at least in Germany) and
to look for liaisons with other disciplines of
archaeology in order to survive. For many
years now, professorships have not been as
generously endowed as they generally were
in the 1960’s. The academic junior staff has,
at German universities, been largely elimi-
nated, administrative jobs are subject to cuts,
and secretaries who took care of bureaucratic
tasks for the department head will soon be-
come entirely a thing of the past. Burdened
with administration, the professor or scientif-
ic director  – if he is active as a field archae-
ologist – has less and less time to concern
himself with adequate publication. Due to the
demands of teaching and on-site research, he
is left with only a very restricted time budget
to present the finds in detail and to ensure
their adequate scholarly analysis.

Does this sound defeatist? Things are not
quite as bleak as my short sketch would make
it appear. Thanks to social media, the younger
generation can contact field archaeologists
quickly, form networks with international
scholars, ask questions regarding finds, re-
ceive background information, access other-
wise hard-to-get literature with the click of
a mouse, and comb through databases. Jeal-
ousy and vanity are replaced by interest and
idealism: this is my hope! In any case, no one
can take from us the intimate relationship to
archaeology and also to ancient art.

On visiting a colleague in Jerusalem, I, by
coincidence, discovered this impressive frag-
ment of a monumental bronze oil lamp,
which had formed part of the Baidun Family
Collection since 1976. After receiving the ex-
port license from the Israel Antiquities Au-
thorities, the object was shipped to Basle.

In its charming, unrestored condition, the
fragment displays a crusty, earthy patina. It
belonged to lamp with multiple spouts, and
is decorated with the mask of a comedian,
whose open mouth serves as air vent. The
dimensions of the entire lamp were mono-
mental. The spout itself is 21 cm long, and
the diameter of the whole object can be re-
constructed as measuring 1 m!

The actor gapes at us with furrowed brow,
wrinkled nose and erect hair. A rectangular
fitting with square cross-section was cast
separately and is placed over a peg behind
the mask and fastened by a horizontal iron
pin. Above it, the flat snout of a dolphin can
be seen. One of the chains with which the
lamp was suspended from the ceiling would
have been fastened to its tail.

Such ceiling lamps with multiple snouts
are only rarely preserved. This spout alone
weighs 1460 g! The whole lamp would have
weighed over 20 kg.

It was frequently used, as testified by the
traces of burning and heat at the tip of
the snout. One would like to calculate the quan-
tity of oil used by such a lamp. The lamp
was cast in the same manner as were large
bronzes, i.e. with the typical rectangular
plaques, that were inserted after casting had
taken place, in order to correct casting errors.

A lamp of these dimensions would have
graced and illuminated a very stately villa,
a temple or a bath. It gives us an idea of the
now lost extravagance and luxury of the fur-
nishings found in 1st and 2nd century A.D.
Palestine.
What shall we do with Oemialarnpnim?
(cont.)

Thus, we have been racking our brains over such a problem for almost four years. At Auction 5 of Cahn Auktionen AG, an Etruscan funerary urn of the 3rd-2nd century B.C. was offered for sale as lot 134. The slightly conical vessel was decorated with an elegant ribbon in red paint, and, just below the rim, the name of the deceased was written in slender Etruscan letters. Transliterated into Latin letters, the inscription reads: Oemialarnpnim.

It is nothing short of a miracle that, for over two thousand years the mortal remains of Oemialarnpnim were preserved in this urn, although his/her last sleep had been rather restless for quite some time, with the urn passing from one collection to the next. On September 16, 2010, this long partnership came to an abrupt end. The lucky highest bidder was probably more attracted to the artistic quality of the vessel than to its function as a funerary urn. It is, after all, not everyone’s cup of tea to store the bones of a dead person in one’s home, and collectors of ancient art frequently try to forget the fact that many archaeological finds come from a funerary context. In any case, it was the buyer’s wish that we keep the remains of Oemialarnpnim, allowing the urn to enter the new collection empty.

As a result, we were faced with the question of what to do with Oemialarnpnim? Simply to throw away the bones of a human being would be lacking in respect and piety. Their renewed interment would, probably, be more appropriate, especially as the Etruscans thought it very important to provide their dead with an attractive environment, in order to prevent them from returning to torment the living. But where and according to which cultic practices should this be done? The “Schweizer Naturbestatter” were willing to bury the bones in their interment forest, but Jean-David Cahn did not like this idea, because the Etruscan would be in a totally foreign environment there. Rather, he suggests considering donating Oemialarnpnim’s remains to an Institute of Medical History for research purposes.

We will keep you posted.

The Debate

Unpublished Excavations

By Sir John Boardman

A long-standing problem which affects our understanding of antiquity and especially of ancient art lies in the fact that a very great deal of information about excavated sites and objects has never been published. It is easy to understand the reason for this but little is done to remedy the matter.

Many excavations are undertaken as rescue operations by the authorities in any country (I think especially of Italy, Greece, Turkey) but the authorities involved may not have the skill or, more importantly, the time and financial resources to prepare publication, and other scholars are often reluctant to take on material which has been found more or less by accident unless it is of absorbing importance. Another category of find for which publication responsibility may be difficult to define, is that from illicit excavations, confiscated by police or “appearing” on the market. More important perhaps is the case of major excavations undertaken by teams, perhaps from a university, where the personnel involved may change over the years and where the material found is so considerable in size that publication cannot easily be effected by a single scholar. Individual major finds are generally made known fairly quickly since they enhance the prestige of the excavation and excavators. The rest of the material may easily be neglected until an interested scholar appears who is willing to deal with it. Of course, an excavator cannot know exactly what he or she is going to find. A massive hoard of coins or sealings or decorated pottery may be found without the excavating team having an expert on hand to deal with them in the proper manner. “The proper manner” is also a problem these days and it is easy to make a mountain out of a molehill when coping with archaeological material – to demand or expect an excessive degree of study, analysis and comparanda. The more we know the more expensive and time-consuming become the techniques of study where, often, a simpler approach would prove adequate for the demands of further scholarship.

A special case is that of old excavations published incompletely by modern standards although thought adequate at the time. A good example is the site at Al Mina in Turkey, excavated by Sir Leonard Woolley and published by him in two journal articles. The mass of material not published in detail is still, for the most part, accessible, though much was distributed to universities or museums who had contributed. There are also detailed inventories (Fig. 1). The trays of sherds in the BM can still be studied (Fig. 2), but Woolley was exceptional. The American excavations in the Agora at Athens still lack publication in several categories, but the material is accessible in the great Stoa of Attalos which they rebuilt (Fig. 3), and is the object of continuing study by American and Greek scholars. All is not always lost.

Otherwise, the result of this rather unpredictable aspect of excavating antiquity is that valuable historical or archaeological material...
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Is there a solution? A more liberal attitude on the part of archaeological ministries and museums has to be encouraged. There was a few years ago a scheme by which Italian museums could lend decorated vases to American museums where they could be properly restored and cleaned for exhibition as a “payment” for the temporary loan. This sort of arrangement can certainly help conserve the material and make it known to scholars and the public, but such objects are rather a special case, more art than archaeology, and most information from excavations comes from sometimes plentiful but unimpressive material, sometimes not worthy of display but of extreme historical and archaeological importance. Maybe the question to be asked of any proposed new excavation should be not “where”, or “by whom”, or “how much”, but simply “why?”. 

Fig. 3: Tray of sherds from Al Mina in the British Museum.