ARTICLES
Collecting the Classical World: First Steps in a Quantitative History

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Of the two values of ancient objects, the connoisseur's first concern is with the object today, and the archaeologist's is with its past place and the knowledge it offers about the past. Central to both is provenance, which comprises the "archaeology" of the item—its story until it went to rest in the ground—and its "history"—its story once found and brought to human awareness again. Our response to looting of antiquities depends on how serious is the impact on knowledge, so we need a "quantitative history" of collecting—how much there was to start with, how much has been dug up, how much we know about it, how much remains. Four quantitative histories are reported: on Cycladic figures, on items in recent celebrated classical collections, on antiquities sold at auction in recent decades, and on classical collecting at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. These pioneering studies are not yet enough to make a clear overall picture; our preliminary conclusion is a glum view of the damage caused by the illicit pursuit of antiquities.

1 THE TWO CENTRAL VALUES OF ANCIENT OBJECTS: THE CONNOISSEUR'S AND THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S

Ancient things exist today as objects in the present, which we find attractive, beautiful, strange, sinister, ugly, informative, enigmatic, or simply of no interest, according to our emotional and cultural attitudes. The modern response may try to follow closely the meaning of the object as it was known to its creators. That may be more successful within one cultural tradition, such as those of Islamic or Western art, where the modern eye can more reliably be informed and directed by knowledge of and immersion within the same and continuing tradition of iconography and of meaning. This way of valuing objects in the present, respected and

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enjoyed for how we respond to them today, we can call the *connoisseur*'s value, for it embodies the traditional connoisseur's approach.

Although the connoisseur's values may repeat today those which defined the meaning and value of an ancient object in its own time, there is no reason why they must or should. Classical statuary was painted, yet modern values especially since Winckelmann's time have chosen instead to prefer the marble to be bare and white.[1] The exalted regard we now hold for painted pottery as a high art in the ancient Greek world does not match its lower relative value in its own time.[2] The long fascination which the West has found in ancient Egyptian things is not matched by an informed knowledge of just what they meant and just how they functioned in ancient Egyptian society. Living in a very different society without animal gods, we see that most lovely red-stone baboon in the British Museum Egyptian galleries first as an image of the baboon as an animal. That remains the case—through habit and cultural imprinting—even if we have diligently read the essential introductions to the singular structures of the ancient Egyptian worldview that precede the scholarly accounts of ancient Egyptian art.[3] When we do, we know to think of it not first as a sculpture of an animal, but of a spiritual being: Hapi, who guards the lungs in one of the canopic burial jars and chances to take the physical form of a baboon.

When objects come from far outside the Western tradition, there is even more opportunity for cultural values to be placed upon them today that do not match those of the society of origin. Picasso and the modern artists of early-twentieth-century Paris were inspired by West African wood carvings. Those European artists saw the carvings as the most direct of artistic expressions—because they had been made by people in a state of nature, undistracted by the centuries of constrained art in the academy. Yet the carvings in question were *not* the natural work of nature's children but were created within old and developed traditions which in their own ways may have been as arbitrary and directing in their controlled artistic conventions as were those of the French *salon*. At the end of the same century, in parallel with ancient objects which move from the earth of Third World countries to the Western galleries and collectors go contemporary artefacts and objects, African wood carvings still amongst them; in much the same way, their meaning changes fundamentally as they travel long distances, both physical and cultural, from the carver-creator to the collector-connoisseur.[4]

The marble figures from the Neolithic and Bronze Age of the Cyclades are famously revered today through their similarity (not by chance alone) with early-twentieth-century European sculpture.[5] Female depictions from prehistoric Europe are today often referred to as images of an ancient mother goddess, for reasons having more to do with turn-of-the-millennium attitudes toward images of women than with secure knowledge of their meanings and roles in ancient Europe.[6] One reason that the Aboriginal "dot paintings" of the Aus-

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tralian central desert have become fashionable is that their graphic conventions, deriving from indigenous traditions of body decoration, sand painting, and rock-art, chance to coincide with the look of abstract expressionist art, a historically separate affair.

There is nothing at all wrong with this. Objects routinely change in meaning and value as they cross cultural frontiers. All of us who care for ancient things and for ancient people can be glad they still have such a lively and a positive meaning today. But there is a danger. Because the objects have existed in the two cultural contexts, the modern and the ancient, it is easy to project back onto that ancient society their modern meanings. The Cycladic marble statuettes are now routinely called "reclining figures,"[7] in echo of Henry Moore (who owned three Cycladic figures[8]), yet such slight evidence as we have does not suggest they were decidedly lying down in their ancient context.[9] They were small objects routinely placed in human graves of an illiterate society, so we can be confident they did not have the social role then that is held by a large "Reclining Figure" which lies as a monumental mass in a twentieth-century sculpture park. One also needs to realize how straightforward the issues can be: the reason that an auction catalogue calls a Cycladic figure "reclining" in its text yet illustrates it held by a metal stand in an upright position[10] is the simple one that it *sounds* better described one way and *looks* better illustrated the other way!

The rhetoric that now surrounds Cycladic figures and the artefacts of the European Bronze Age invests these prehistoric things with anachronistic links in defining entities, such as the Greek nation-state or the unified community of European nations, that had no existence in ancient times. There is no harm, and much good, in these ancient things having such force in the modern world. There need only be a corresponding recognition that a meaning today may or may not have corresponded with an ancient meaning.

The other value of ancient objects, which we can call the *archaeologist*'s, arises from their worth as objects conveying evidence of and from the past. This value will be higher for those epochs—all of prehistory (by definition) and many within formally historical contexts—where the other sources of information are slight or absent. In this value, an exact correlation between ancient reality and modern perception is the ideal aimed at, since a true understanding of the past is the purpose. Of course, we modern researchers cannot escape from our own cultural context: the words and phrases even of simple description we use are never neutral but carry values with them, whether we choose to call a given object a "vase" or a "painted pot," a "stone statuette" or a "reclining figure." There is, rightly, a wish to get behind and beyond modern values, to understand the "other," the meanings of objects in their own cultural places so distant from us. It should be immaterial, for instance, if that understanding means we enjoy and respect certain objects less because we know their ancient context. The finely shaped and el-

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egant obsidian blades of the ancient Mesoamericans will seem less lovely as objects —or if more alluring, for a sinister reason—when one knows how central was mass human sacrifice to Mayan society. That emotional response is not directly relevant to the research ambition, which is to understand Mayan society as it actually was. The opening special exhibition at the Getty Center, Los Angeles, 1997–99, was entitled *Beyond Beauty: Antiquities as Evidence*, a title which in five words encapsulates the issues.

2 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE CONNOISSEUR'S AND THE ARCHAEOLOGIST'S INTERESTS

As long as there has been classical and archaeological scholarship, the connoisseur's and the archaeologist's two interests have run together—harmoniously so for centuries. But they are not coincident, and in the case of contemporary antiquities collecting they have actually become directly opposed.

Why?

The tendency of the connoisseur's value is to concern itself with *immanent* aspects, those contained in the object itself. It is not centrally important just where it comes from or what its ancient meaning was. Those aspects do count in a secondary way, because a knowledge of provenance and of cultural origin informs and enriches response to the immanent elements. That secondary aspect has other consequences also. A knowledge of provenance, both of where an object came from in the ground and of who has owned it since, gives confidence the object is genuinely ancient and not a later fabrication. And the place of cultural origin will very materially affect its cash value, in relation to judgments of relative merit and considerations of supply and demand, in much the same way as applies to Impressionist paintings, Renaissance sculpture, or any other class of desired and collected aesthetic object.

Some connoisseurs hold to a strongly uniformitarian view: there are universal aesthetics which transcend the varied specifics of diverse cultures. George Ortiz sees his collecting of ancient objects from varied cultures which he finds fine and compelling as the "pursuit of the absolute."[11] If that is so, then the acute observer today can recover the meaning of an object by direct observation of it; the connoisseur's good response will be the same as the archaeologist's, as both capture the original meaning, and the connoisseur's perceptive look avoids the wearisome archaeological labour of studying intricacies in the physical context of the piece. There is a Jungian view here of an absolute, now deeply out of sympathy with the archaeologists and the anthropologists. If only it were so, research would be so much easier! Those researchers, in recognizing human universals of culture and experience, find more striking the diversity, variety, and historical particularity of so-

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cial meanings, especially those that surround beautiful and precious objects; we see these as overwhelmingly relative. Since most archaeologists do not hold to a strong and uniting view of a human consistency in these matters, we are uncomfortable also, for instance, with the confidence of some feminist ideas that the social attitudes of a benign and nurturing mother goddess or of a mother-centred society can be unambiguously discerned from the physical evidence of certain prehistoric images of women.[12]

Accordingly, the tendency of the archaeologists' value has been increasingly to address *contextual* aspects, those surrounding the object. These begin with its place in culture history ("Attic, second century B.C.") and over recent decades have seen a huge increase and elaboration in what is regarded as a sufficient report of context: not just findspot and likely date, but an ever more minute report of the kind of deposit an object came from in as many aspects of its ecological and human frame as an ingeniously self-enlarging discipline can find to take an interest in noticing. The immanent aspects, those contained in the object itself, remain of central value. They are also subject to ever more ingenious study by novel methods, as one sees in Mattusch's work on one class of object, classical cast bronzes.[13] These minute explorations of the fine physical object itself are a long-declining portion of that overall body of information which archaeologists now work with and value.

For the same reason, the old museum collections are of decisively decreasing research value. Take the prehistoric axe, identifiable as Neolithic by its distinctive immanent characteristics, about which we know only that it came from (or is said to have come from) "Port Stewart, County Antrim, Ireland," in the Cambridge University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (accession 1923.1082 I). Its beauty—and the present authors do find Neolithic polished axes beautiful—does not change. Yet this lovely object is of ever less scholarly value as our ignorance of its context means it can contribute ever less to the very lively research concerns we continue to have for Neolithic axes in the British Isles.[14] To take another class of artefact, there are hand-axes by the hundred and the thousand in the older museum collections of Old World lithics; but as vaguely provenanced individual finds ("Thames gravels, Maidenhead"; "Nile terraces") from redeposited contexts, they offer slight information by comparison with the comparatively few hand-axes that have been excavated archaeologically to modern standards from the comparatively few hand-axe sites where good and primary contexts exist (e.g., Boxgrove, England[15]). However diligently one studies the hand-axes in the old collections through the information immanent in the objects (e.g., the complex variability of their size and shape), the lack of recorded context has been, first, a grave and, increasingly now, a fatal obstacle to productive study of them.[16]

If one goes back a century, one finds that the reporting of context was much the same for objects in the connoisseur's and in the archaeologist's worlds: a

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findspot in broad terms ("north Essex," "Mycenae"), an inferred or likely date ("Neolithic," "Early Helladic"), and perhaps the summary context, that is conveyed in a few words ("in a grave," "from a temple foundation deposit"). That kind of report remains routine in the connoisseur's tradition but has become inadequate more nearly to the point of uselessness for contemporary archaeological research. It has the largest consequences for the kind of knowledge of ancient places and peoples which is then possible. It explains the ever declining value of the old collections for modern research, a declining value that shows itself in many ways. A recent demonstration of this is in the choice of twelve carvings placed in the new Great Court project of the British Museum to introduce the cultures represented in the galleries beyond.[17] Of the twelve, three are of unknown and one of uncertain findspot; for the remaining eight for which a findspot is known, our knowledge of the archaeological context is inadequate by modern standards of scholarship. The marble lion from Knidos in Asia Minor is a good instance. We know exactly where it comes from, and even the trackway still exists that was made from its findspot in the ruins of a great tomb down to the water's edge so its several tonnes of weight could be moved away. But we know so little about the archaeology of the lion that even the basic information of its date—probably late fourth or early third century B.C.—derives from firsthand knowledge not of this lion, but of a similar one elsewhere with a better historical and archaeological context.

We see this divergence over time between the interests and the methods of the two values, and of the communities that hold those values, as the main motor for the increasing division between the archaeologists and the connoisseurs; their interests, which for so long have been identical or close, are becoming increasingly opposed. Unprovenanced antiquities have always surfaced; both the connoisseurs and the archaeologists have taken an interest in them and learned from them. But we are now at a point where the connoisseurs—though regretting the lack of provenance and context which would enrich by a secondary knowledge their central and immanent value—still enjoy these objects as good and wonderful ancient things, while the archaeologists increasingly find them void of information and useless. Worse, every object that leaves the ground without an exacting record, and so has lost a quantum of information in the missing account of context, the archaeologist sees as a theft of that potential knowledge which has been stolen and scattered away.

So we see the two values as necessarily tending to separation and to opposition, on these defining and fundamental grounds. Other divergences also have a divisive effect—the connoisseur's impulse to restore fine things towards their original glory against the archaeologist's to leave things as time and chance have treated them, the national and other interests which hold such decided and divided views as to who legitimately owns the past of any one place, and the financial consequences of buying and selling antiquities. The surfacing of an object outside its re-

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gion of origin and its possession in an overseas jurisdiction have become offences against the nation-states whose people partly define themselves and their nationhood by a cultural patrimony of material objects.

There is an important aysmmetry here. Expression of the archaeological concern for knowledge of the ancient object in its own time and cultural context does nothing to obstruct the connoisseur's concern. When the sculptor Henry Moore reported his reactions to ancient objects in the British Museum collection in an excellent book,[18] he gave a range of responses. Some are consistent with what we know about their ancient contexts, while some are not; many address aspects about which we have little information. That artist's or connoisseur's response, based in the modern world, is in no way obstructed by the archaeological concern with the objects' ancient meanings. That is not the case when pursuit of the connoisseur's interest leads to the loss of knowledge of the original context; when that happens, the connoisseur's concern destroys the possibility of a productive archaeological interest.

Those other issues have been addressed many times and in many places. We have chosen to concentrate on the central divergence, between the immanence of the object and the context of the object, as defined above and as expressed in the attitudes to objects of these two traditions of approach to ancient things.

3 THE CYCLADIC STUDY

Two of us recognized—much less clearly—this distinction between the connoisseur's and the archaeologist's distinct concerns in a study of the Cycladic figures,[19] one of the first to address these issues. Cycladic figures were selected because there was a clearly defined corpus, and because most or nearly all or all seem to have been made and originally deposited in a small band of islands, the Cyclades, in the southern Aegean during the third millennium B.C.[20] On the one hand, as archaeologists we could read reports of looted cemeteries in the Cyclades, and on the other, we could observe Cycladic figures "surfacing" in a routine way through the antiquities market.

The wholesale looting of cemeteries to provide collectors with a particular type of artefact means that some information is irretrievably lost. Not only have 90 percent of the contexts been lost, but we have to use the few contexts recorded for the remaining 10 percent to answer questions about the types of context where such figures were displayed, used, and buried. Most come, or are thought to have come, from the graves. Keros had a deposit of a different character, the "Keros hoard," a major deposit of fragmentary figures which ended up in a Swiss private collection.[21] So we have an enigma, rather than any kind of certain record, when we wish to develop our knowledge of some nonfunerary or other religious use for

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such figures. There are a few large figures, whose larger size leads some to argue they were used as cult statues; but we have no context for them by which to confirm or deny the theories. Even attempts to group the figures stylistically, and to attribute them to specific islands or to the hands of individual artisans, must surely founder when only 10 percent of the figures come from secure archaeological contexts. It is impossible to make a credible distribution study of the figures when some 90 percent have either no stated findspot or a findspot which is reported in some indirect way. (It will be some variant of "said to be," perhaps said by the man wearing the suit in that smart gallery who said that the man who sold it to him in the suburbs of Munich said that the driver who brought it in from Greece said that the man whom he brought it for said that he had been told that it had been dug up on the island of Paros. . . . But there again, one of these gentlemen may have misheard.[22])

The context is lost, however, not just for the Cycladic figures themselves which we were studying. The bones, the broken small fragments, and the other stuff without art-market value are wholly lost; knowledge of associations between artefacts which are not discarded may be lost. The same gloomy picture, perhaps even worse, might well emerge from a parallel study for other classes of Early Cycladic objects—the marble vessels, or ceramic decorated "frying pans." Even a well-documented Cycladic collection in a university museum like the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge only has material with loose findspots and inadequate record of context.[23] Those items were acquired at the turn of the twentieth century when Cambridge men were exploring the Greek islands. Again we see that the present-day connoisseur's attitude—"context is a bonus when known but neither central nor essential"—coincides with archaeological attitudes of three or four generations ago, but it is at odds with all rules of archaeological field research today.

It is for these reasons that a fundamental opposition is now apparent between these interests. We see no reason why a fundamental opposition must persist, for there are several strong causes for the connoisseur's interest to benefit from the archaeological, which we see as having more to offer to the connoisseur's actual best interest than does the immediate promise of more access to fine antiquities for sale.

4 THE LARGER PATTERN OF CLASSICAL COLLECTING OVER TIME

It was suggested to us that the pattern emerging from Cycladic was not typical for classical antiquity.[24] The limited area of the Cyclades and the desirability of these Cycladic figures has meant—so it was put to us—that our study would present a gloomier picture than would be true for a wider range of classical antiquity with

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its marble sculptures, painted pottery, and small bronzes. As Eisenberg, a knowledgeable dealer and museum benefactor, explained to us, Cycladic is a famous mess, so much so that sensible dealers steer clear of it.

Our Cycladic study is semiquantitative and confined to one class of antiquities alone. There, pursuit of these lovely things has had calamitous material and intellectual consequences. Is this a uniquely unhappy state of affairs? Or sadly typical? Or something in between?

So, going forward from that first study of the Cycladic figures, we have turned our attention to the broader spectrum of classical antiquity. Specifically, we decided to look at the spate of major exhibitions, largely drawn from the collections of private individuals, which were a feature of the classical scene through the 1990s; this makes the second study.[25]

Because those collections drew on the antiquities market, it is important to gain a sense of the pattern in that market: that is the third study,[26] an exploration of what is offered in the leading London auction rooms. Extending back some decades, this study begins to offer a historical perspective, in beginning to show the antiquities market has changed in its profile since World War II.

Private ownership of antiquities is itself part of a larger pattern, in which the other element is the public ownership of antiquities in the museum collections. The long-established museum collections also offer a picture of collecting over a yet longer time scale, extending to the centuries since the Renaissance interest in classical artefacts prompted the collecting habits of the modern world. The fourth study[27] reports on accessions to the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford—the oldest public museum in Britain—over three centuries, giving a first report of the longer-term pattern of collecting into public ownership.

5 PROVENANCE AND ITS DEFINITION AS THE "ARCHAEOLOGY" TOGETHER WITH THE "HISTORY" OF AN OBJECT

In studying objects from private collections, the key issue that divides the corpus is provenance: for some material we have no knowledge beyond the immanent (because it has "no provenance") and for other material we have knowledge of context (because there is provenance).

Provenance (also spelled "provenience") has several meanings. We think it valuable to clarify those, and to suggest distinct terms for two central aspects. Since provenance often adds to an object's value, these are not matters wholly of neutral judgement. Provenance, defined in the dictionary as "the fact of coming from some particular source or quarter," is actually becoming a diversity of information, rather than a simple fact. The "particular source or quarter" may be an item's hav-

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ing been found at a site of classical antiquity, or its having been in an auction sale of less than a decade ago, or a report of who owned it at one time in between its finding and the present. The main discriminant is the different moment in time at which the fact of having a certain source is noticed and thereafter seems pertinent. So we need to consider the entire life story of an object now esteemed a fine and ancient thing in a museum or private collection, the successive stages of events it has experienced, and the changing concerns which directed interest in it at successive stages.

A defined object has some starting place of origin where it was made, which begins its story. The first part of the story is its life in the ancient world, its making and subsequent transport, use, transformation, reuse, repair, remaking, and so on until the moment when it went out of human circulation by being swallowed into the ground. Since all this is a matter for archaeological study, and that place in the ground is its archaeological context, we can call this ancient story the *archaeology* of the object.[28] The information that the object thenceforth conveys resides in the object itself and in the information conveyed by its sedimentary context and associations. The object then stays in a limbo until such time as it is removed; by its nature and archaeological context, just what it is and in just what stratigraphic place it holds in just what deposit at just what location, it has the potential to inform its finders about its archaeological story and therefore about the ancient society which made and used it.

At some long-subsequent date, the object was come across, recovered from the ground, and reentered human society in a new career as an archaeological and art object; since this modern story is, or could be, a matter of documented historical record, we can call this the *history* of the object. For some objects we have a complete historical record that links where it is found to its present whereabouts through a documented history of its successive owners, especially for objects which have been in a single museum over a long term. For other objects the historical record is incomplete (when its ownership is known for part of the time and is then unknown until it "surfaces" later on) or missing (when we think or know it was dug up decades or centuries ago, but we do not know where it has been since then).

The moment of discovery and recovery is the time when the object leaves the archaeological domain in the ground and is taken away to start its historical career. There should be good knowledge of this key moment, knowledge which links the archaeology of the object to the history of the object. Instead of a link, there is too often a break. When there is poor knowledge of the moment—as is the case for many objects recovered in the pioneering days of systematic excavation or as chance finds—our ability to learn from its archaeology is reduced. When there is no knowledge—as is the case for those objects which surface without record—our ability to learn from its archaeology is reduced fatally to zero.

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Our knowledge of this key moment which starts its history equally varies from the good through the poor to zero.

6 THE IDEA OF QUANTITATIVE HISTORY, AND THE NEED FOR IT

The literature about antiquities—whether in the academic publications or the newspapers—is full of compelling individual stories. Partisan opinions are supported by vivid accounts of telling case studies, and by the decided views that individuals have come to after years of experience.

An informed debate about the issue of looted antiquities needs to go beyond that documented and often anecdotal evidence for looting to some figures which demonstrate the level and impact of looting. It is the actual numbers which will indicate the truth of the matter. Some of the questions that will elicit key numbers will be:

How many of some given class of objects were there in ancient times?

How many survived in the ground as archaeological objects?

How many have been recovered?

Where are the ones recovered?

How much do we know about them?

At what rate are they at the present being removed from the ground with record?

At what rate are they at the present being removed from the ground without record?

Some objects have always been and will always be rare or unique—for example, the Parthenon sculptures, or individual pharaonic burials. Some existed in the many thousands or hundreds of thousands, even millions, such as the rolled hand-axes ubiquitous in Pleistocene river gravels across the Old World, the Egyptian *shabti* figures, or the amphorae used to transport liquids in the classical world. Some classes of ancient objects are known to exist in several hundred or a few thousand examples, among them the *kouros* figures, large Hellenistic bronzes, and the Cycladic figures.

The numbers are crucial since they decide how much there has been and how much there is, how much there was, how much has been lost. This approach can begin to show us where the lovely new objects that "surface" in the auctions and in the collections come from. Are they for the most part recycled from the old col-

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lections? Or are they for the most part new finds, irregularly recovered and illicitly exported from their countries of origin?

A quantitative account would inform us what is happening at the present and how that relates to what has happened in the past. Those uncertainties of the present equally apply to the past. We think we know, overall, the pattern of collecting of antiquities by private individuals and by public museums over the centuries—in a qualitative way. But again, we do not know actual numbers. Where are the quantitative histories that would tell us just how many antiquities and of what classes left Egypt in the eighteenth century, or Greece in the nineteenth? Without some grasp of how many antiquities there were, and how many moved about when, it is impossible to assess the scale of what is happening nowadays in relation to the whole pattern.[29]

7 FOUR QUANTITATIVE HISTORIES IN SUMMARY

We have been making the first steps to quantitative study in the four individual explorations. We report these four in summary form, and on the basis of that experience indicate what a quantitative approach appears to us to promise.

7.1 QUANTITATIVE HISTORY 1: CYCLADIC FIGURES[30]

It has been estimated that the surviving corpus for Cycladic figures represents some 1,600 pieces, whether fragmentary or complete. These figures have emerged in the following ways: through archaeological excavation, through chance finds, through illicit excavation, through the antiquities market, and from old collections. Our study has suggested that only about 140 figures were recovered archaeologically; the remaining 1,400 or so figures have surfaced on the antiquities market without explanation.[31] So less than 10 percent of the corpus of known figures comes with any sort of archaeological context. To put it another way, more than 90 percent of the figures have no archaeological context.

Within our study was an examination of the major 1987 exhibition, Cycladic Art in North American Collections,[32] which was drawn from both private and public collections. The ninety-two figures in the exhibition provided these statistics:

Certain provenance:	0
"Said to be":	33
No origin:	59

Our quantitative study was able to provide more detail. If the 1500—1600 figures or so in the corpus are indeed genuine—and Cycladic figures are notoriously easy

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to fake—then it would be possible to estimate how many graves had been looted to provide the corpus. From excavated cemeteries, we know that Cycladic figures tend to be found in about every tenth grave. If we exclude the 350 figures associated with the Keros hoard, some 1,150 figures have no known findspot; we think—without actually knowing—that these came from graves. Thus *if* the excavated 10 percent of the figures come from representative cemeteries, and that must surely be a big "if," then the remaining 1,150 figures represent some 12,000 graves looted. As most Early Cycladic cemeteries consist of 15–20 graves, we are talking about several hundred looted cemeteries destroyed forever by this scale of looting: 85 percent of that funerary record in the Cyclades may have been destroyed through looting in order to provide beautiful objects for collectors and museums.

We concluded, in this 1993 study, that the destruction of the Cycladic archaeological contexts had been on such a scale that the materials likely no longer existed by which research could make a decisively different and improved account of the ancient Cyclades, as one would hope improved scholarship over future decades and centuries would do. A few years on now, research in the Cyclades continues, of course, but we see nothing to change our 1993 opinion.

7.2 QUANTITATIVE HISTORY 2: CONTEMPORARY CLASSICAL COLLECTIONS[33]

The second quantitative history considers seven exhibitions of antiquities which were displayed in Europe, North America, and Israel through the 1990s. Many of these were exclusively drawn from private collections or incorporated private material. They were high-profile exhibitions with illustrated catalogues at prestige venues, three of private collections alone, three combining private with museum collections, one of a museum collection largely originating in a recent private collection. This study has tabulated nearly 1,400 fine antiquities, of which over 850 were in the new private collections. The seven exhibitions are:

Private collections exhibited

1. At the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1990–91, Glories of the Past: Ancient Art from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection.[34]
2. At the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Cleveland Museum of Art, 1994–95, A Passion for Antiquities: Ancient Art from the Collection of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman.[35]
3. At the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, the State Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Moscow, and the Royal Academy, London, 1993–94, In Pursuit of the Absolute: Art of the Ancient World from the George Ortiz Collection.[36]

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Private and museum collections exhibited together

4. At the Israel Museum, Jerusalem, Israel, 1991, Italy of the Etruscans.[37]

5. At the Fitzwilliam Museum, University of Cambridge, England, 1992, The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan, the private component being the AIC collection.[38]

6. At the Arthur M. Sackler Art Museum, Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge, Massachusetts; the Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, Ohio; and the Tampa Museum of Art, Tampa, Florida, 1996–97, The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections.[39]

Museum collection largely deriving from private collecting

7. The San Antonio Museum of Art permanent collection of ancient Greek ceramics, as published in the catalogue *Greek Vases in the San Antonio Museum of Art*.[40]

Our study concentrated on the key aspects: when the object first surfaced, what details of the findspot were provided, and what account was given of the object by way of its provenance, that is, its archaeology and its history. Intending to think clearly about what kinds of information about provenance are offered, we devised these classes within archaeology and history.

7.2.1 Archaeology of the Contemporary Classical Collections

For archaeology, that is, the information known about the object until it left the ground in modern times, we classified the objects into six groups, from those for which fullest information was offered, to those for which there is least:

a1 Named findspot, or "almost certainly" therefrom
a2 "Said to be" or "allegedly" from a named findspot
a3 "Probably" from a named findspot
a4 "Possibly" or "perhaps" from a named findspot
a5 Unknown or unstated
a6 Stated in some terms, but the source of that appears to be affinity: it has been deduced from diagnostic characteristics observed in the object itself, rather than supplied by independent information.

Notice that class a1—the class with the best archaeological information—is satisfied by an account of the archaeology in the simplest terms of a named place as findspot, a place which may be a large town or even a region; that information falls short of a satisfactory archaeological account of context.

Table 1 reports the status of archaeology for the items, divided by exhibition, and between the public and private collections. Seventy-four percent of the objects have no indication of archaeology beyond what is inferred from their immanent

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TABLE 1. ARCHAEOLOGY OF ITEMS IN THE SEVEN CLASSICAL COLLECTIONS TAKEN TOGETHER. SEE TEXT FOR HOW THE CATEGORIES ARE DEFINED.

	*Archaeology**						
Archaeology class	*Named* a1	*"Said to be"* a2	*"Probably"* a3	*"Possibly"* a4	*Unstated* a5	*Inferred by affinity* a6	*Total*
1. White and Levy, "Glories"	9	5	1		5	177	197
2. Fleischman, "Passion"	3	12				168	183
3. Ortiz, "Pursuit"	32	126	2			113	273
4A. Israel, "Etruscans": private collections	15	4	4		142	1	166
4B. Israel, "Etruscans": museum collections	3	15	1		196	1	216
5A. "AIC," "Transformation": "AIC," collection	31		1			12	44
5B. "AIC," "Transformation": non-"AIC" collections**	54	3	4			16	77
6A. Harvard, "Fire": private collections	2	7			2	2	13
6B. Harvard, "Fire": museum collections	2	20	1		2	17	42
7. San Antonio, "Vases"		2				183	185
Number	151	194	14		347	690	1396
%	11	14	1		25	49	

Archaeology summary	*Some indication*	*No indication*	*Total*
Number	359	1037	1396
%	26	74	

*A similar table in Gill and Chippindale (note 5) uses the word "findspot" in place of "archaeology," and p1–p7 in place of a1–a7. See note 28 for why we prefer "archaeology" and its corresponding abbreviations a1–a7.

**Objects other than coins.

characteristics. Twenty-six percent have some indication, but more than half of these are qualified in such terms as "said to be from" or other indications of doubt. Eleven percent have stated findspots, but that number, about one object in nine, we are cautious of. Firstly, the indication of findspot is often very vague—a country or region, rather than a certain deposit in a specific archaeological site—and so the "findspot" is an archaeological account of only slight research value. Secondly, as we look with care at just what is said in the catalogues and as we see the history of individual objects, we are increasingly fearful that many of those statements printed in terms of "found in X" (our category a1), as if an independent record, are in truth deduced from diagnostic characteristics (our category a6). We conjecture that a surfacing object is identified as, say, Minoan (our a6), and that this inferred attribution is at some later stage or by another party reported in different terms as "findspot Crete" (our a1), since Crete is where one would expect a Minoan object to be found. So we are not certain the confidently reported findspots actually *are* always the findspots, and an unknown (high?) proportion of the "most secure" archaeological accounts in fact will rightly belong in the "least secure" group! Dismayingly, then, we do not reliably know whether we indeed know what we think we know about the archaeology of the items.

The pattern is not much different between the museum and the private collections.

7.2.2 History of the Contemporary Classical Collections

For history, that is, the information known about the object since it left the ground in modern times, we classified the objects into six groups, from that for which the longest history was offered to those for which there is the shortest or no history at all before the object "surfaced" in the exhibition or collection:

h1 An account is given since it was found and left the ground
h2 Known at a date up to 1914
h3 Known in the period 1915–44
h4 Known in the period 1945–73
h5 Known in the period 1974–86
h6 Known in the period from 1987 onward
h7 Surfaced on this occasion
h8 Date of surfacing not known to us
h9 Date of surfacing uncertain

Table 2 reports the status of history for the items, divided by exhibition, and between the public and private collections. Some 9 percent, or one item in eleven, have a history from the ground or are known before 1945. If one regards a history going back to before 1945 as meaning the object is from "an old collection," then it is *not* the case that these new classical collections of the 1980s and 1990s are

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TABLE 2. HISTORY OF ITEMS IN THE SEVEN CLASSICAL COLLECTIONS TAKEN TOGETHER. SEE TEXT FOR HOW THE CATEGORIES ARE DEFINED.

	History: Date of surfacing									
History class	*Known since ground* h1	*Up to 1914* h2	*1915–44* h3	*1945–73* h4	*1974–86* h5	*Since 1987* h6	*Surfaced on this occasion* h7	*Date not known* h8	*Date uncertain* h9	*Total*
1. White and Levy, "Glories"	1	4	1	22	32	12	121	4		197
2. Fleischman, "Passion"		6	1	6	9	27	128	6		183
3. Ortiz, "Pursuit"	5	8	12	75	51	22	94	6		273
4A. Israel, "Etruscans": private collections		2	1	2	15	1	142	3		166
4B. Israel, "Etruscans": museum collections				49	136	24	1	6		216
5A. AIC," "Transformation": "AIC" collection			1		2	1	40			44
5B. "AIC," "Transformation": non-"AIC" collections*	23	21	11	17	5					77
6A. Harvard, "Fire": private collections		2		1	2	5	3			13
6B. Harvard, "Fire": museum collections		15	8	12	4	2	1			42
7. San Antonio "Vases"				18	138	21		8		185
Number	29	58	35	202	394	115	530	33		1396
%	2	4	3	14	28	8	38	2		99

History summary	*To 1973*	*1974 onward*	*Information lacking*	*Total*
Number	324	1039	33	1396
%	23	74	2	99

*Objects other than coins.

demonstrably recycled from those old collections. Some 38 percent surfaced on the occasion of the exhibitions (but for private collections the figure is 60 percent). We have divided the postwar years into three groups; if one takes 1973, the year the Archaeological Institute of America declared its change of publication policy,[41] as a key date, then 74 percent of these objects surfaced subsequent to that shift. We notice that the 23 percent surfacing before then are not all "clean," for that change of AIA policy, and the other shifts in attitude, happened in response to the open scandal of unprovenanced antiquities surfacing in the years before 1973.

We conclude that the pattern across high-profile classical collecting, as evident in these exhibitions and as legitimated by their display in the best museums (and by the acquisition of one of these collections by the Getty), is that a very high proportion of these items do surface without archaeological context or record of history. We think Eisenberg may well be right in thinking that Cycladic figures are a notable mess, but we see that classical collecting as a whole is a mess. Without a reanalysis of the Cycladic figures using categories more closely comparable with those used for the classical collections, we cannot say which mess is worse.

7.3 QUANTITATIVE HISTORY 3: FIFTY YEARS OF ANTIQUITIES IN THE AUCTION ROOMS[42]

London has been one of the main centres for the redistribution of antiquities in this century through the activity of the major auction houses of Sotheby's, Christie's, Bonham's, and Phillip's. Subsequent to the exposé in Peter Watson's book *Sotheby's: Inside Story*,[43] Sotheby's closed down their antiquities operations in London; antiquities continue to be auctioned at Sotheby's in New York and at the other London houses. The new virtual auction houses on the Internet, where Sotheby's has a presence, are giving antiquities some prominence.

This recent study has made a first quantitative sketch of the London auction market in antiquities since World War II,[44] as it is documented by the printed catalogues. The illustrated catalogues of the auction rooms provide a public record of what passed through them, not matched by any equivalent sources for what moved through the dealers. Catalogues of the two larger houses, Sotheby's and Christie's, were sampled at ten-year intervals over a forty-year period, from 1958 to 1998.[45] Ten catalogues from each of the two auction houses were sampled, with some 2,051 lots tabulated. Approximately one-quarter of the objects are Egyptian.

The tabulations focused on three aspects of information which appeared in the catalogues. The first aspect is the vendor. This ranges from the wholly anonymous, through the thoroughly vague such as "property of a lady," to the very vague ("property of a Belgian gentleman"), to the specific, naming the selling individual or institution.

The second aspect is the archaeology of the piece. This ranges from a named findspot, through a findspot qualified with some element of doubt, to unstated or

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what we have considered to be the affinity, in other words, the deduction of findspot from distinctive features of the object itself. These can be classed by essentially the same categories as for the classical collections study (above).

The third aspect is the history of the piece. This ranges from knowledge of the piece since it left the ground, through to the object surfacing for the first time at the auction. The categories used for the classical study (above) cannot be used usefully here, since the auction-house study itself spans a long period of time, but equivalent classes can be made in terms of how long a history of the piece is offered.

What did these studies show?

Unstated vendors seem to be the norm for the sales, with unnamed Belgian as well as Swiss gentlemen high in the league. At both Sotheby's and Christie's, 81 percent of objects are offered by unnamed vendors. Only a few sales have a high percentage of named vendors, generally when a collection of a named individual is dispersed in a block of lots making a large portion of a single sale. The Christie's auction of June 1978 returns a figure of 65 percent of objects with a named vendor, as many come from "the collection of the late Joseph Muller of Solothurn, Switzerland"; the Swiss connection is perhaps ironic.

The archaeology of the objects provides a decisive picture: 96 percent of the objects auctioned at Sotheby's and 95 percent of those at Christie's have no indication of findspot whatsoever, so the level of archaeological account is decisively *less* than it is for the classical collections. The picture emerging for the history of the objects is also clear, with Sotheby's and Christie's auctioning 88 percent and 89 percent respectively of their objects without historical information. So just under 90 percent of objects offered for auction in the survey since World War II first "surfaced" in the sale itself. Only 2 percent of objects from Christie's and 1 percent from Sotheby's appear with a history which could be traced back to the ground. The historical information is very patchy in its occurrence: the 10 percent or so of items with history largely derive from occasions when a named collection is dispersed as a grouped set of lots.

With so little information offered as to either archaeology or history, there are no strong long-term trends to be identified in the forty-year time span of the study. Silence is the consistent rule. This really is surprising, since it is so much a convention of collecting that objects with provenance are worth more than those without, and those with a provenance considered good are worth even more. An Old Master painting with ideal provenance—known to have been made in the artist's studio at a certain date and with a recorded sequence of owners ever since—has its archaeological equivalent in the object with a full account both in archaeological terms (where it was excavated) and in historical terms (subsequent movements). It is noticeable that in recent decades there has been some increase in the amount of historical information provided in the sales catalogues.

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We conclude that there is decisively less declared about the archaeology and history of objects on the London auction market than is the case for our classical collections, and that the London market's habits in these matters have not changed much over the postwar decades. One explanation of the difference would be that information is conveyed to auction-room purchasers through means other than the auction catalogues. Another would be that objects acquired by collectors through other routes or intermediaries bring with them more information. This also may shed light on our fear that the declared findspots are not independently known but inferred (as discussed earlier); since the pattern of auction reticence is much the same for archaeology as for history (and as for vendor), there *may* be grounds for some cautious confidence that the collectors' reports of findspot are indeed independent records which may be relied on.

7.4 QUANTITATIVE HISTORY 4: THE LONG-TERM HISTORY OF A CLASSICAL MUSEUM COLLECTION, THE ASHMOLEAN[46]

All these movements inside and outside the twentieth-century market take place against the background of longer-term patterns, those that over the centuries move cultural objects within nation-states and across the world. Our fourth study is a pioneering attempt at a quantitative history of museum collections. A full quantitative history of Western collecting is a labour of centuries, so we start with a single museum and even then find the number of objects sufficiently large that we are obliged to deal only with a small sample taken from it.

The holdings of Greek and Roman antiquities in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford University, represent some 300 years of collecting,[47] presenting a body of data for the study of trends over that time span. The founding gift of the Tradescant Collection was accepted by Oxford in 1683, when a building was found to house the material. During the 1860s, no doubt mirroring the 1850 gift of the *Museum Disneianum* to Cambridge (where it was displayed in the Fitzwilliam Museum),[48] the Ashmolean acquired a number of classical antiquities, including material from the Christy and Hyde Clarke collections. Its early antiquarian approach was transformed in 1884 when Oxford established a chair of classical archaeology; this led to the move of the museum to its present location on Beaumont Street.

The documentation for the Ashmolean is preserved in a series of accession registers and catalogues. An accessions register in the modern sense has been kept since 1869, and the subsequent 130 years record in excess of 95,000 entries. A sampling system was adopted which selected six blocks of 10 years, and the first 50 classical entries of each year were tabulated (though not every year had 50 antiquities accessioned). To bring the study up to date, further material from 1988–89 to 1998–99 was also considered.

The collection was quantified in terms of object type (for example, ceramics,

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sculpture, or jewellery), of archaeological provenance, of previous history, and of accession route (for example, from an excavation, by gift or by purchase).

The largest category of accession in the sampled periods was for ceramics, followed a long way behind by sculpture. In the earliest sample, from the 1870s, ceramics represented 58 percent of the accessions, compared to 8 percent for sculpture; ceramics rose to its highest point of 82 percent during the 1930s, compared to 14 percent for sculpture. This can be explained generally by the survival of pottery, especially in graves, but also by a local factor, the specific interest at Oxford in Greek painted pottery, notably by Sir John Beazley. In some ways this is a similar pattern to that found at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, where from 1920 to 1960, under the keepership of Winifred Lamb, few additions of sculpture were made to the already substantial holdings of the John Disney and E.D. Clarke collections, whereas representative pottery was added as fascicules of the *Corpus Vasorum Antiquorum* were being prepared.[49] Both the Ashmolean and the Fitzwilliam acquired representative selections of shard material from British excavations in Greece.

Initially a large number of Ashmolean acquisitions were acquired with some indication of archaeological provenance. This can be explained by the activities of the Reverend Greville Chester or the keepers John Phillips and Arthur Evans in the Mediterranean. There was a noticeable fall in this percentage during the 1920s and 1930s, when a greater emphasis was placed on acquiring objects through purchase, often in the main auction houses in London. It is likely that an emphasis was placed on the suitability of an object to fill perceived gaps in the Ashmolean's existing holdings, a policy which was explicitly stated at the Fitzwilliam. From the 1950s onward there has been a gradual increase in the proportion of acquisitions which display some indication of the archaeology.

The distribution of objects with prior history is telling. For the 1870s and 1880s, 44 percent and 58 percent of the objects had a prior history, reflecting the collecting of Chester, Phillips, or Evans. This fell to a low of 7 percent and 5 percent during the 1920s and 1930s, when many objects were being bought on the antiquities market. Since then there has been a steady increase in the acquisition of objects which have a certain prior history.

The accession route also shows plain trends, notably the gradual increase of objects from excavations connected with the Ashmolean or Oxford. Gifts or bequests, often by former members of Oxford, have also been a significant group. Purchases became increasingly important through the 1920s and 1930s, reaching a high of 62 percent; this has subsequently fallen back to 22 percent.

These parallel trends at the Ashmolean reflect a changing relationship of the museum and the market. Initially, the museum almost always acquired directly from those pursuing classical studies in classical lands; indeed, at the start there was no antiquities market as such from which to acquire. Around the turn of the

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nineteenth to the twentieth century, that means of acquisition led to a greatly increased number of accessions, as systematic excavation generated so many finds. The mid-twentieth century saw a turning to the marketplace, and the late twentieth century saw a withdrawal as the concerns of the market and of the museums were seen to diverge. With a reluctance to draw on the market, with much higher antiquities prices, and with national policies that antiquities should not leave their countries of findspot, the major routes by which classical antiquities have come to the Ashmolean are variously blocked; the most striking feature of the closing years of the twentieth century was the small quantity of new classical acquisitions.

To our knowledge, the Ashmolean study is—like the other quantitative studies collectively reported here—unprecedented. We cannot know if the Ashmolean story is typical until comparable studies have been made of other collections, so that a pan-British, pan-European, or pan-United States pattern can be seen and reported. Every museum collection, like every private collection, has idiosyncratic elements, with the Ashmolean collections strongly showing the consequences of particular individuals, such as Evans and Beazley, and of the particular course that classical archaeology has taken at Oxford. Alongside those local factors, we think we may begin to discern in the Ashmolean story aspects which would be paralleled in other collections. But until more quantitative history is done, we cannot address the large questions: How many and what kind of classical antiquities left Italy and Greece during the pre-Napoleonic era of the Grand Tour? During the nineteenth-century era of cultural tourism? What has been the volume and nature of antiquities leaving Egypt during the many centuries its ancient cultures fascinated European society?

8 DISCUSSION: THE QUESTIONS OF NUMBERS AND THE IDEA OF RESOURCES BEING DEPLETED

The central issue is one of numbers. Are the objects in present times being extracted from archaeological sites and surfacing without record of their archaeology and history a small or even an inconsequential proportion of what has survived from ancient times to the present, so no great harm follows? Are they a large or an overwhelming proportion, to the point that productive new understanding of these ancient objects and of the societies they record has become or will shortly become impossible? That gloomy view is certainly the case for the societies which made the Cycladic figures.[50] Trendall's standard handbook on South Italian Red Figure reported in 1989: "There are at present something approaching 20,000 red-figured vases from South Italy and Sicily, of which about 1500 may be classed as Lucanian, over 10,000 as Apulian, some 4000 as Campanian, 2000 as Paestan and

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over 1000 as Sicilian."[51] For how many of those 20,000 do we have knowledge of context, alongside that evidence which is immanent in them? How many vases were originally placed in the southern Italian ground? How many are still in the ground? How rapidly are those being removed? Where are they going? For how many is there record of context? And in what degree and detail of record? We have few quantitative studies so far; the four reported here are the only ones we are aware of which address the issues in these terms, when taken with those on Apulian painted pottery and on Belizean antiquities, presented at the 1999 Cambridge conference.[52] For many classes of material, the evidence may in fact exist and be reported in scattered places, from which some collated picture could be put together. According to one study, there are now almost as many Apulian pots in North America as there are in the museums of Italy, a movement which can largely be explained through the deliberate ransacking of Italian cemeteries to obtain this category of material.[53]

How does one know if a resource is being exhausted? If—like the individuals that amount to the population of an endangered species—there exists a certain and limited number, then one sign of a nearing end may be a diminution in the number killed or seen. If, for instance, the number of newly surfacing South Italian Red Figure vases has been decidedly dwindling, that could be because the resource is being worked out. (The analogy with endangered species is imperfect here: living animals reproduce and inanimate vases do not.) Or it could be that the pressure to exploit has lessened. Or there is a more complex story: perhaps the supply of Red Figure vases from the common known contexts *is* being exhausted, but there remains a large population in other contexts, of which we are less aware or unaware. Perhaps the vases called Apulian are no longer coming from Apulia but from some other region the scholars have not been sufficiently alert to. (One can compare the coelacanth, the ancient fish *genus* threatened in its known habitat off Madagascar but recently reported to exist also as a separate population in Indonesian waters, far away across the Indian Ocean.) As more quantitative studies are done, we may know better what the populations of antiquities are in their many varieties of *genus* and *species*, and we may begin to recognize some patterns in what happens to those populations over time. In the case of the Cycladic figures, for example, we have a slow growth in the rate of "capture," for these human images were in the nineteenth century regarded more as barbarous than desirable. Capture reached a high level in the decades after World War II, in response to their evocation of modernist sculpture, when the illicit excavation of cemeteries in quest of the figures seems to have reached some kind of peak. Will the rate at which figures surface correspondingly decline? Has it already? If it has not or it does not, whence come the figures still being seen for the first time? From accumulated caches built up in the years of busy looting? From a body of figures which went into now-old European collections, late in the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries,

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despite the marginal aesthetic standing of Cycladic art during those decades? Or from new manufacture, since no reliable means exist to identify a marble figure as modern, and the identification of fakes depends on stylistic assessment alone?

9 THE CONSUMPTION OF THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

The archaeological interest laments the loss of knowledge which it sees to follow from the kind of classical collecting reported in this paper.

How great is that loss?

In respect of Cycladic figures, we have the numbers to know. About 90 percent of the corpus is without archaeology and nearly without history. The figures are diverse, varying in many ways, and largely occur in a limited region, the Cycladic Islands, and a limited archaeological context, the cemeteries; the cemeteries have for the most part been destroyed through looting. Some figures occur in quite different contexts; what kind of site the "Keros hoard" came from remains uncertain, but it clearly was not a cemetery like the others, and it had hundreds of figures. It is clear that a 10 percent sample cannot give even a reliable sketch of the range of Cycladic figures as regards their own characteristics, their range in space, and their range in time. Because it seems likely that a great majority of the places where they are found have now been destroyed—a few by archaeological enquiry with some record, many by illicit looting without record—our potential understanding of Cycladic culture, a culture of truly singular character, is much reduced, not just now but, it seems, in perpetuity.[54] By definition, because we have lost it we do not know what it is that we have lost.

In respect of some other kinds of ancient objects and cultures, we again may have sufficient grounds to estimate how much there once was. The Minoan civilization is largely confined to the island of Crete, and the key buildings within Minoan culture were its palaces, of which the most famous is Knossos.[55] Because these great Minoan sites seem to be distributed across the island, each in its own territory, it is likely that the small number we are aware of is all, or nearly all, there are.

It is certainly true that archaeology, in its energetic development in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, has had too little regard for the rate at which it has consumed. Cycladic and Minoan cultures are unusual in that we may be able to make a reasonably accurate estimate as to just how much has been consumed and how much remains. For some kinds of archaeological material, the damage that has been inflicted more by archaeologists and other academic or scholarly researchers than by looters is already fatal. A case in point is the Upper Palaeolithic sites of the British Isles,[56] traces of the late glacial hunter-gatherers who repopulated Britain in

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the period before 10,000 years ago, when the peak of the glaciation was past and the climate had warmed sufficiently to permit a human presence once more. There never were, we think, many Upper Palaeolithic sites in Britain, and most of those were in caves, not a numerous feature in Britain. Accordingly, most were soon excavated by archaeologists or others interested in cave deposits, and modern study increasingly is limited by the paucity of material and of information from old studies which has to substitute for new research.[57] It is also the case that there is a long habit, only now being broken, of individual archaeologists conducting fieldwork far faster than they can analyse the finds and publish the results, so that even if they do not die prematurely, individuals often do not write up all their studies.

For broader categories in general, such as the classical antiquities of the Greek world or the major sites of ancient Egypt, it is clear that the resource has been depleted at an unsustainable rate far beyond anything that could be continued. Without quantitative studies in the spirit of the present one, it is impossible to estimate with any useful accuracy just how much there was to begin with, just how much has been excavated, just how much has been recovered by any means, and just how much remains in the ground. The philosophical and ethical questions that follow—how long do we expect that resource in the ground to have to last for, and therefore at what rate can we reasonably consume it?—has not been answered; it has barely been asked.

At Stonehenge, a genuinely unique site, the majority of the archaeological deposits have been destroyed in the course of archaeological study through the twentieth century.[58] Yet new research plans[59] propose further destructive investigation with some—but in the present authors' view inadequate—regard for how much has been so destroyed and how much remains in relation to the very many centuries that Stonehenge may survive and be of interest into the future.

10 IN CONCLUSION

These are pioneering studies, and we are aware of difficulties with them. It was only after they had tabulated several hundred items from the classical collections that Chippindale and Gill began to fear that their distinction in the archaeological classifications between "findspot known" and "findspot inferred" cannot reliably be discerned from the information available, so these extremes in the range of archaeological information offered might in fact be better melded together.

Overall, we think that the glum view expressed by Gill and Chippindale in respect of Cycladic figures[60] applies very widely. The material consequences have been very damaging. Just how damaging depends, we suggest, on more quantitative studies. It is only when one can express a loss of information as a proportion of the potential quantity of information which either did once exist, or still exists,

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that one can know whether that degree of loss is slight or catastrophic or something in between.

As more studies are made, so the larger picture will appear and in it—we would anticipate—some consistent patterns.

At present, there exists a very wide range of views as regards the antiquities in circulation on the private market and those being acquired outside their countries of original origin. Those in the market contend that the illicit component is small; those critical of the market contend that the illicit component is high or overwhelming. Each side points to individual instances, or to the collected impression gained through long experience, to indicate that its view is correct. The facts will decide, and one means to establish the facts is through this kind of quantitative study.

A common specific explanation for the surfacing of unprovenanced antiquities is that these seemingly new items are not illicit but are recycled from old collections, the owners of which choose not to identify themselves—for all sorts of good reasons. We see this contention as a priori impossible for those classes of antiquities not being collected decades ago when the old collections were being formed. There can have been *no* terracottas from Mali in the old European collections formed before Malian terracottas were known to exist.

Until those quantitative facts are established, we have only the qualitative facts of individual case studies.[61] Nevertheless, there is already a noticeable pattern. There are a mounting number of instances where it is proven or accepted that a particular object or group of objects which surfaced without provenance in recent decades were indeed illicitly removed from their countries of origin. We know of *no* recent instance where a surfacing object or group of objects proves—when the fuller story later comes to light—to have been recycled from old collections.

We see *some* account of history and/or archaeology is given for a certain proportion of objects in the new classical collections, those that concentrate on classes of objects long collected—Greek painted pottery, Greek and Roman sculpture, and so on.

The case of Apulian Red Figure pottery, also classical, shows a striking history of changing attitudes. Initially South Italian was much desired and collected, primarily in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries—the first Greek pottery esteemed by antiquarians, museums, and private collectors. Then, beginning in the late 1820s, the Etruscan tombs were opened, revealing the Attic wares. The fashion changed, and South Italian was relegated to a curiosity, desired more for its instructive scenes of theatre and mythology than as itself an art tradition of high merit. So there is a good quantity of South Italian, especially Apulian, in museum collections, most of it derived from older private collections. The modern wave of collecting began in the 1960s and 1970s; in the earlier decades of the century, we do not know of private collectors specializing in this type of pottery.

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At that time many Apulian vases began to appear on the market, the aesthetic appreciation changed, and many collectors began to specialize in Apulian. That period was also one when looting in Apulia grew very much in scale. The questions, then, are: What proportion of Apulian vases coming to light in the last forty or so years is recycled from old collections? What proportion is from the new illicit excavation and export? We see the contention that "surfacing" objects must be recycled from old collections as a priori improbable for those classes of antiquities where objects are known to be disappearing from the countries of origin in such quantities and where objects of just the same type are surfacing without provenance in the new collections and in the auction catalogues.

Mayan antiquities, again, have long been known, but it was comparatively recently that they became a standard class of collected ancient art. One would also forecast Mayan would have a low proportion demonstrably recycled from old collections.

If this correlation proves consistent, then the likelihood of the old collections being the source of most or many of these surfacing objects will be low.

The four studies reported here all lie in the domain of what Gill and Chippindale call "material consequences,"[62] within which we include the immediate consequences for scholarship of the information that does or does not accompany individual ancient objects. Not addressed by them is the complementary realm of "intellectual consequences," the way in which classical scholarship is shaped and directed in its frames of thinking by what the material is and how it comes to scholarly light. Those issues, as important as the material consequences, we hope to address in another place.

NOTES

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Papers from the Cambridge conference are now published: Neil Brodie, Jennifer Doole, and Colin Renfrew (eds.), *Trade in Illicit Antiquities: The Destruction of the World's Archaeological Heritage* (McDonald Institute of Archaeology, Cambridge 2001). One classical study in it takes a quantitative approach much like ours: Ricardo J. Elia, Analysis of the Looting, Selling, and Collecting of Apulian Red-Figure Vases: A Quantitative Approach, *id.* at 145–53. Its conclusions are strikingly consistent with ours. A non-Classical study in it also reports some numbers: Eliza-

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beth Gilgan, Looting and the Market for Maya Objects: A Belizean Perspective, *id.* at 83–87. Strikingly, that story in the Maya realm is also much the same as we see for classical: Mayan antiquities, like Classical, are admired and highly valued as art objects; they have 'surfaced' on the market in quantities without declared history or archaeology at a time of large-scale looting in the countries of origin, much as classical antiquities continue to do. That close parallel is an important indication that the particular shape the classical story takes is not due to the local circumstances of classical antiquity or the Mediterranean world today but largely follows from the attitudes of the market and its makers.

1. Alex Potts, *Flesh and the Ideal: Winckelmann and the Origins of Art History* (Yale University Press, New Haven 1994).

2. Michael Vickers and David W. J. Gill, *Artful Crafts: Ancient Greek Silverware and Pottery* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1994).

3. Stevenson Smith, *The Art and Architecture of Ancient Egypt* (Penguin, Harmondsworth 1958) 1–10.

4. Christopher B. Steiner, *African Art in Transit* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1994).

5. David W. J. Gill and Christopher Chippindale, Material and Intellectual Consequences of Esteem for Cycladic Figures, 97 *American Journal of Archaeology* 605–6, 601–59 (1993).

6. Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris (eds.), *Ancient Goddesses* (British Museum Press, London 1998); Lynn Meskell, Twin Peaks: The Archaeology of Çatalhöyök, *Ancient Goddesses* 46–62 (Lucy Goodison and Christine Morris eds., British Museum Press, London 1998).

7. *See* Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5, at 659.

8. A. Sachini, Prehistoric Cycladic Figures and Their Influence on Early Twentieth-Century Sculpture (unpublished M. Litt. thesis, University of Edinburgh 1984).

9. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5, at 655–56.

10. Christopher Chippindale and David W. J. Gill, Material Consequences of Contemporary Classical Collecting, 104 *American Journal of Archaeology* Appendix A, 463–511 (2000).

11. George Ortiz, *In Pursuit of the Absolute: Art of the Ancient World from the George Ortiz Collection* (Benteli-Werd Publishers, Bern 1994). See his own contributions to that catalogue for a good statement of this approach.

12. Meskell, *supra* note 6.

13. Carol C. Mattusch, Corinthian Metalworking: The Forum Area, 46 *Hesperia* 380–89 (1977); Carol C. Mattusch, *Greek Bronze Statuary: From the Beginnings through the Fifth Century B.C.* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1988); Carol C. Mattusch, Corinthian Metalworking: The Gymnasium Bronze Foundry, 60 *Hesperia* 383–95 (1991); Carol C. Mattusch, *Classical Bronzes: The Art and Craft of Greek and Roman Statuary* (Cornell University Press, Ithaca 1996); Carol C. Mattusch, *The Victorious Youth* (Getty Museum, Los Angeles 1997); and Carol C. Mattusch *et al.* (eds.), *The Fire of Hephaistos: Large Classical Bronzes from North American Collections* (Harvard University Art Museums, Cambridge 1996).

14. *See, e.g.,* T. H. McK. Clough and W. A. Cummins (eds.), *Stone Axe Studies* (Council for British Archaeology, London 1979, Research Report 23); Alison Sheridan, Porcellanite Artefacts: A New Survey, 49 *Ulster Journal of Archaeology* 19–32 (1986); S. J. Chappell, *Stone Axe Morphology and Distribution in Neolithic Britain* (British Archaeological Reports, British Series 177, Oxford 1987); T. H. McK. Clough and W. A. Cummins (eds.), *Stone Axe Studies* 2 (Council for British Archaeology, London 1988, Research Report 67); Timothy Darvill, The Circulation of Neolithic

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Stone and Flint Axes: A Case Study from Wales and the Mid-West of England, 55 *Proceedings of the Prehistoric Society* 27–43 (1989); Alison Sheridan, Scottish Stone Axeheads: Some New Work and Recent Discoveries, *Vessels for the Ancestors* 194–212 (Niall Sharples and Alison Sheridan eds., Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh 1992); Richard Bradley and Mark Edmonds, *Interpreting the Axe Trade* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1993); Gabriel Cooney and Stephen Mandal, Getting to the Core of the Problem: Petrological Results from the Irish Stone Axe Project, 69 *Antiquity* 969–980 (1995); and Gabriel Cooney and Stephen Mandal, *The Irish Stone Axe Project: Monograph 1* (Wordwell, Bray 1998).

15. Michael W. Pitts and Mark Roberts, *Fairweather Eden : The Excavation of Boxgrove and the First Europeans* (Century, London 1997); Mark B. Roberts, *Boxgrove: A Middle Pleistocene Hominid Site at Eartham Quarry, Boxgrove, West Sussex* (English Heritage, Archaeological Report 17, London 1999).

16. *See, e.g.*, John Wymer, *Lower Palaeolithic Archaeology in Britain as Represented by the Thames Valley* (John Baker, London 1968); and Derek A. Roe, *The Lower and Middle Paleolithic Periods in Britain* (Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1981).

17. *Queen Elizabeth II Great Court Guide* (British Museum, London 2000).

18. Henry Moore and David Finn, *Henry Moore at the British Museum* (British Museum Publications, London 1981).

19. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5.

20. Because so many have no provenance, we are obliged to suppose "most or nearly all or all seem to have been made and originally deposited" in the islands, rather than to know that as a fact. Strictly, the position is this: nearly all the Cycladic figures whose archaeological context is reliably known were found in the Cycladic islands, and many of the others are said to be from the Cyclades.

21. Pat Getz-Preziosi, The "Keros Hoard": Introduction to an Early Cycladic Enigma, *Antidoron: Festschrift für Jurgen Thimme zum 65. Geburtstag am 26. September 1982* 37–44 (D. Metzler, B. Otto, and C. Müller-Wirth eds., C.F. Muller, Karlsruhe 1983).

22. We make our actors in these scenes male, against the rule of the *International Journal of Cultural Property* that gender-neutral language be used, because the evidence so far is that the people involved in these kinds of affairs are nearly all men.

23. Robert G. Arnott and David W. J. Gill, *Cycladica in Cambridge* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge in press).

24. Jerome Eisenberg, reported in Christopher Chippindale and David W. J. Gill, Cycladic Figures: Art versus Archaeology? *Antiquities Trade or Betrayed: Legal, Ethical, and Conservation Issues* 141, 131–42 (Kathryn W. Tubb ed., Archetype, London 1995).

25. Chippindale and Gill, *supra* note 10.

26. Emily Salter, The Auction Market in Antiquities since the Second World War (unpublished M. Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge 1999).

27. Christian Hamilton, A Quantitative History of Classical Collecting at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (unpublished M. Phil. dissertation, University of Cambridge 1999).

28. "Provenance" has been used with so many meanings that we think it is no longer a clear word and we think it now best used only as a very general term. A fuller account of the meanings of provenance and why we think it no longer a clear word appears in Chippindale and Gill,

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supra note 10. That text, as submitted, used the words "archaeology" and "history" as we use them in the present text. The editors of that journal, requesting and requiring revision in the usual way, had us use the word "findspot" in place of "archaeology," and that is what appears in the published paper (*see* especially its pp. 469–70). Still thinking "archaeology" is the better word, we use it here.

The quality and quantity of information about the archaeology of an item varies; certainly, it often consists simply of a place-name for the spot it was found—the "findspot." A good account of the archaeology of an object is a much fuller record than that.

29. An important pioneering study, to an extent paralleling part of those reported here, is Vinnie Nørskov, Greek Vases in New Contexts: Collecting Greek Vases, an Aspect of Modern Reception of Antiquity (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Aarhus 1998).

30. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5.

31. The Cycladic study was completed before Gill and Chippindale understood the benefit of an exact enumeration of the corpus, individual figure by figure, of the kind carried out for the classical study. The need remains to explore the Cycladic corpus, figure by figure, on an individual basis.

32. Pat Getz-Preziosi (ed.), *Early Cycladic Art in North American Collections* (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond 1987).

33. Chippindale and Gill, *supra* note 10.

34. D. von Bothmer (ed.), *Glories of the Past: Ancient Art from the Shelby White and Leon Levy Collection* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1990).

35. Marion True and Kenneth Hamma (eds.), *A Passion for Antiquities: Ancient Art from the Collection of Barbara and Lawrence Fleischman* (J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu 1994). The Fleischman collection has since been acquired by the Getty, which moves it from amongst the private collections into a museum collection deriving from private collecting. We leave it in this category since that is what it was at the time of its exhibition. Also, this means elements in the present paper are more easily matched with those in the fuller report of this part of the study (Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 10).

36. Ortiz, *supra* note 11.

37. I. Jucker et al., *Italy of the Etruscans: Archaeological Finds from the First Millennium B.C.E.* (Israel Museum, Jerusalem 1991). The Israel Museum collections themselves largely derive from recent private collecting.

38. Elizabeth Errington, Joe Cribb, and Maggie Claringbull (eds.), *The Crossroads of Asia: Transformation in Image and Symbol in the Art of Ancient Afghanistan and Pakistan* (Ancient India and Iran Trust, Cambridge 1992).

39. Mattusch et al., *The fire of Hephaistos, supra* note 13.

40. H. Alan Shapiro, Carlos A. Picón, Gerry D. Scott III, and Debra Z. Schafter (eds.), *Greek Vases in the San Antonio Museum of Art* (San Antonio Museum of Art, San Antonio 1995).

41. A number of initiatives have been taken over quite some years now intended to address "surfacing" antiquities, so there are several dates that can be regarded as a turning point, of which this initiative and this year are only one.

42. Salter, *supra* note 26.

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43. Peter Watson, *Sotheby's: Inside Story* (Bloomsbury, London 1997).

44. Salter, *supra* note 26.

45. Christie's did not hold a summer sale in 1958, and Sotheby's had by 1998 suspended the sale of antiquities in London, so alternative sale catalogues of much the same date were used in place of these.

46. Hamilton, *supra* note 27.

47. R. F. Ovenell, *The Ashmolean Museum, 1683–1894* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1986).

48. David W. J. Gill, John Disney, *in New dictionary of National Biography* (Clarendon Press, Oxford in press).

49. David W. J. Gill, Winifred Lamb and the Fitzwilliam Museum, *Classics in Cambridge* (C.A. Stray ed., 1999).

50. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5, at 629.

51. A. D. Trendall, *Red Figure Vases of South Italy and Sicily: A Handbook* 7 (Thames and Hudson, London 1989).

52. See remarks at the beginning of these notes.

53. Daniel Graepler and Marina Mazzei, *Provenienze: Sconosciuta! Tombaroli, mercanti e collezionisti: l'Italia archeologica allo sbaraglio* 80–81 (Edipuglia, Bari 1996).

54. *See*, for an up-to-date account of what we do know, Cyprian Broodbank, *An Island Archaeology of the Early Cyclades* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2000).

55. For the discovery, and early attitudes to excavating and exploring, *see* J. Alexander MacGillivray, *Minotaur: Sir Arthur Evans and the Archaeology of the Minoan Myth* (Jonathan Cape, London 2000).

56. John B. Campbell, *The Upper Palaeolithic of Britain: A Study of Man and Nature in the Late Ice Age* (Clarendon Press, Oxford 1977).

57. Simon N. Collcutt (ed.), *The Palaeolithic of Britain and Its Nearest Neighbours: Recent Trends* (Department of Archaeology and Prehistory, University of Sheffield, Sheffield 1986).

58. R. M. J. Cleal, K. E. Walker, and R. Montague, *Stonehenge in Its Landscape: Twentieth-Century Excavations* (English Heritage, Archaeological Report 10, London 1995).

59. Geoffrey Wainwright, Future Directions for the Study of Stonehenge and Its Landscape, *Science and Stonehenge* 335–41 (Barry Cunliffe and Colin Renfrew eds., Oxford University Press, Proceedings of the British Academy 92, Oxford 1997).

60. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5.

61. A. Colin Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy, and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology: eenentwintigste Kroon-Voordracht gehouden voor de Stichting Nederlands Museum voor Anthropologie en Praehistorie te Amsterdam op 15 Oktober 1999* (Stichting Nederlands Museum, Amsterdam 1999); A. Colin Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy, and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (Duckworth, London 2000).

62. Gill and Chippindale, *supra* note 5.

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