

Beware the Invisible

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In this article I focus on museum objects that have been taken illegally from another country or place. I also discuss the illegal trade in which many objects are involved, the different points of view concerning illegally traded antiquities. and I try, with help from two philosophers, to see how the dispute or discussion can be seen from another perspective, and possibly give a form of solution. I also deal with concepts such as the subaltern, invisible traces, contextual- and microarchaeology.

Keywords

Hybridism, subaltern, colonialism, invisible traces, contextual archaeology, microarchaeology, looting, illicit trade

Introduction

When objects are taken illegally from their original place, they touch many hands with different thoughts and visions. They may travel the world if not found by authorities. They experience a world that they were not intentionally made to meet¹ (Cornell *et al.* 2002: 23). Illegally traded antiquities usually receive different values or levels of importance depending on who is looking at them, be it the thief, the seller, the buyer or, the 'rightful' owner. From the day an archaeological object is unearthed, it will be in a constant chain of cultural encounters.

Much is lost when an object is removed from its archaeological context; even the smallest attributes can tell us a lot about its history and that of the people who used it and their way of life. While not apparent to the eye, with archaeological analysis and documentation there are facts and information that can be used to gain a wider view, different perspectives and multiple conclusions. In other words, we can uncover invisible traces.

The knowledge we construct is never a total picture; it is always based on specific pieces of evidence... and we need to open up our possibilities for interrogating the work we do interpreting and constructing visions of the past and the present. (Engelstad 230)

When interpreting an illegally traded antiquity that has no similar objects it can be compared with and no traces remaining of its origins, we can only find out more about its history if we are open to wider possibilities and opening our minds some more.

Illegally traded antiquities and their constant chain of cultural encounters will be discussed from the point of view of two philosophers: Gayatri Chachravorty Spivak and Jacques Derrida. I will try to apply these philosophers' ideas to answering the

following three questions: what are invisible traces surrounding illegally traded archaeological objects? Why should we be aware of these traces? Why do people in the archaeological and museological world disagree on the precautions to be taken to stop the so-called black market in antiquities? Thereafter I will discuss what the invisible traces, or silent evidence, surrounding illegally traded antiquities are, how these have been neglected, and also what the act of neglect can tell us about contemporary history. First I will look at antiquities' journey to the museum, the problems with illegally traded antiquities, and about the 'black market' and how it continues to operate. This will be followed by a look at laws regarding illicit trade and about the loopholes that are constantly abused by dealers and collectors. I will then discuss local and global history, before concluding by linking the philosophers' thoughts with the debate about illegally traded antiquities.

Spivak's Thoughts About the Subaltern

In her most famous work *Can the Subaltern Speak?*, Spivak criticizes imperialism, stating that institutional cultural discourses and practice exclude and marginalize the subaltern (Spivak 1993). In other words, in discourse and practice the subaltern groups or individuals who are separate from the ruling power are not able to have their say or any effect in that structure or discourse. Spivak also states that while the subaltern may be able to act, but will not be noticed. If the subaltern were noticed, they would not be subaltern any more (Spivak 1993; also in Gillberg 2009: 25). Spivak uses the term 'subaltern' to refer to human beings in her original text, but I will use the term to refer to antiquities in this paper.

Spivak focuses on how truths are produced, and she wants, by letting the subaltern affect the truth, to produce a more liberating truth (Gosden 2001: 245). In other words, by allowing the subaltern to speak one could create a prehistory which involves everyone and everything. In this paper, therefore, I will try to see if illegally traded antiquities can be seen as subaltern, and if so, how.

Derrida's General Text

Derrida's thoughts are built on a criticism of Freud and in one sense the whole academic world's constant search for the Origin. When this Freudian style is being used, so much information is lost from the general text. This general text includes everything surrounding what we call social context, which can communicate through written text, speech and objects (Derrida 1995). Derrida suggests that we focus on what at first sight seems irrelevant, e.g. the loose ends. This focus can give us clues (unattended traces) that might be vital to the whole picture (Gosden 2001: 245; also see Gustafsson 2009).

By following Derrida's thoughts we, as researchers of historical and antique objects, need to focus on the 'leftovers' rather than the 'gold pieces.' We need to focus on the invisible traces, which are perhaps today seen as unimportant, to be able to let all of the archaeological traces contribute what they can. For example, before washing finds from excavations, traces which might otherwise be washed away should be analysed and

documented (e.g. textile fibres are something which often disappear before the proper examination of cloth). In museums there are commonly information signs beside the displayed objects; these signs usually just tell the viewer what the object is, where it was found and its approximate age. What the sign does not tell its viewers is what they themselves cannot always see: What it is made of, what it looked like before conservation, and if the object has an unknown provenance, why, how did it finally end up in the museum collection, and why is it of importance to the public today. This can give us a better understanding of the pre-historic and historic societies that we study.

These two philosophers are talking about the invisible in different senses, about how things are not as simple as they were thought to be before. We need to explore this complexity and discuss the contradictions to be able to see the whole context of antiquities (Gosden 2001).

The Invisible

An object and its context together, when properly recorded and interpreted, can reveal much more than either one in isolation. (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 10)

Invisible traces surround every object - we just need to learn how to see them. By looking from different perspectives and by looking at an object as a blank canvass ready to be painted upon, without any prejudice or comparison, unseen traces can and will be seen (Derrida 1995; see also Cornell *et al.* 2002). To be able to see these invisible traces it is important to look at the objects not only in the context of the site where they were found, but also from the assemblage from which they came (Gosden 2001: 255) and their regional contexts (Dommelen 2005: 140).

This means that an object that has been looted and turned into an illegally traded antiquity will be a tough object to analyse, for its invisible traces. If the object can be determined to be from a specific area (which is not always the case), then local people and experts can be asked for their viewpoints. Ian Hodder terms this 'contextual archaeology' (Gosden 2001: 255).

Sada Mire conducted contextual research in Somalia² regarding its historical destruction. She found that it is knowledge about the historical objects which is the most important documentation to save, and not the object themselves. Mire conducted her survey on historical objects, by interviewing locals in Somalia and Somali refugees in Europe, and managed to obtain surprisingly many details about Somalian pre-historic objects (Mire 2007). Mire showed with this research that involving the 'locals' (where ever they are situated today) can contribute to archaeological research.

This idea is fascinating, interesting and for some outrageous. Why would this not be a good way of finding out more about the invisible traces of illegally traded antiquities of known provenance? Knowledge is still being passed between generations even though not everything known is recorded (Bergman 2006), so if an illegally traded antiquity

cannot always tell the researcher anything about its past, it can still tell them and the public about today's people.³

These invisible traces can in one way be seen as silent evidence - which some might see and know about, while some might not. David Loeffler has studied the representation of the Norrlandian⁴ (northern Sweden) past in history books and concluded that this large and different part of Sweden has been neglected by authors since the beginning of the writing of Swedish histories. Yet it is not only politicians or rulers that choose the national narratives – it is also the archaeologists (Starzmann 2008: 372f). Archaeologists and historians exclude or include different events, interpretations and facts from their narratives. We therefore need to decide whether or not to allow both other people and ourselves as researchers to see the invisible or unattended traces, in order to be able to contribute to local and broader histories.

The Journey to the Museum

All objects that exist in museums today have in one way or another travelled to the museum, and their origins and find contexts are usually (hopefully) known. An illegally traded antiquity is an object that has either been stolen from another museum (or private owner) or looted from an archaeological site. These two kinds of illegally traded antiquities differ from each other. An object stolen from a museum has, in most cases, originally been registered, documented and its provenance and find context most likely recorded. These objects have a proof of their own existence.

On the other hand, looted objects have already lost their context, having been removed from their original location without any form of documentation. This activity destroys the archaeological sites concerned and hinders further research. The looted object itself has not been registered or documented and can in one way even be seen as non-existent. This form of action (looting) creates objects that can only be sold for their beauty⁵ or uniqueness, and cannot enlighten us with as much knowledge about past times as with objects that have not been looted.

One might expect that both these forms of illegally traded antiquities are difficult to sell on the market, but it is not so. The illicit trade of antiquities is a multi-billion dollar business and is the third largest international monetary market in the world, after the smuggling of drugs and weapons (Polk 2005: 9). This business can only be so huge because of one reason – demand.

Illegally traded antiquities are in demand by private collectors, tourists and museums (Elia 1997: 86; Kersel 2007: 82). Tourists and sellers of illegally obtained antiquities might not know that their activities are illegal. However, collectors are able to spend a large amount of money to be able to get what they want. It is more than likely the case that some of the great collectors are aware of whether the objects they buy have been looted or not, and as Cameron and many other archaeologists state, 'Looters, however, would not loot without buyers... Collectors are the real looters' (Cameron 1997: 68). The

most likely reason as to why the illicit trade is still going on and is even increasing at a rapid rate at the moment (Polk 2005: 9), I believe, is because collectors value the beauty and authenticity of objects more than the knowledge that these objects can give us.

Museums, which are one of the last stops for illegally traded antiquities, contribute to this trade in various ways. Even though looting is not something today's museums are doing themselves, their collecting unintentionally legitimates looted pieces and thus still contributes to the illicit trade (Cameron 1997: 68). Many museums have a great interest in the past, but are not always concerned so much with how knowledge of the past is gained, nor with regard to the role that archaeological objects can play in the memories and lives of today's communities. This is something that is neglected by most international collectors, museums and governments (Starzmann 2007: 375). The former director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Thomas Hoving, once wrote that 'almost every antiquity that has arrived in America in the past ten to twenty years has broken the laws of the country from which it came' (Elia 1997: 92). If this is true for the larger part of the world's museum collections, then it is a very serious cause for concern.

The largest museums are supported by the greatest collectors, which means a large degree of economical stability and good connections for the museum. This is effectively causing the destruction of cultural heritage and creating a corrupt society (Brodie & Doole 2001: 2f). With few questions asked, objects can travel the world and change ownership and values constantly, and it is the questions not being asked by museums that contribute to illicit trade (Elia 1997: 92). The Getty Museum of Malibu for example had 295 entries in their catalogue for a 1994 exhibition, where none of the objects had a known provenance (Elia 1997: 83). It is also sad to note that most new entries on the illegal market have been taken during war times. Large and popular museums such as the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, The New York Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Princeton Fine Arts Museum and many more are examples that have bought antiquities sourced from Iraq during the 2003 war (Starzmann 2008; also in Atwood 2008). If the following three questions had been asked before importing antiquities to museums and showrooms, the black market would have drastically declined. Where have the objects come from? What is the provenance of the objects? And what is the evidence that they were legally obtained from their country of origin (Elia 1997: 92).

The president and director of the Art Institute of Chicago, James Cuno, has stated that if his museum could acquire a masterpiece from another country in 1933, he should be able to do the same today. It is also his belief that looting can not be stopped, so why try? According to him, UNESCO legislation has only 'impoverished our understanding of one another and contribute(d) to a stale, narrowly nationalistic view of culture' (Cuno in Atwood 2008). But as Kersel states, what we do not always understand is that the driving forces behind looting are of a complex nature. This complexity involves the forces of globalisation, as well as nationalism, colonialism, conflicting preservation agendas and management plans, and other long-entrenched traditional practices (Kersel

2007: 82). An extreme example of the results of this complexity is the Somali museum in Muqdisho, which does not have a single pre-historic object to show to visitors anymore (Mire 2007: 56).

To have an exhibition of foreign cultural antiquities as a temporary exhibition is one thing, but having a permanent exhibition with objects from all over the world where most of the objects were taken illegally is quite another, which goes against UNESCO legislation and which shows visitors that in fact there is no mutual understanding of one another, the contrary of Cuno's above quote. As Starzmann states, '... he who owns the past owns the present and may make claims to a country's resources' (2008: 379). Cuno is a good example of colonial thought and nationalistic views. Colonial in the way of not listening to those that have lost the objects and want them back, nationalistic in the sense of collecting the world's antiquities in different ways and claiming ownership of them. Another example is the Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities in Stockholm, once a leading institute in Chinese antiquities. However, not long ago, it became known that a large amount of the antiquities had been obtained illegally, which came as a shock for the contemporary caretakers of the Museum, who are today returning many of the antiquities to the Chinese state (see Johansson 2009: 112).

Even though most countries have enacted laws against illicit trade, new finds are still entering the black market at an alarming rate (Polk 2005: 9).

The Laws, Their Enforcement and Their Problem

The significance of the object (cultural and scientific) will depend upon its being fully documented. As a matter of principle no acquisition should be made without this full documentation... (ICOM, Ethics of Acquisitions, 1970)

With growing awareness around the world of illegally traded antiquities on the market and the problems with archaeological and historical sites being looted, declarations and statements have been applied to such trade. In 1970 UNESCO issued guidelines on how museums should act with regard to illegally traded antiquities, hoping that illicit trade would decline and eventually disappear (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 8f). 40 years later there are however still people in the museum and archaeology world who see these laws as limiting and 'inhibiting the global movement of art.' (Cuno, quoted in Atwood 2008).

After the Convention's guidelines had been published, most of the countries ratified the convention, but not all (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 8f). We might ask why some chose not to and one explanation is that some countries believe that looting is not causing destruction, but is rather an act of rescuing objects and materials from it (Brodie & Doole 2001: 1). One might ask what 'destruction' are objects being rescued from in this case - of ending up as a research material which does not involve any form of monetary value but simply better knowledge about the human past?

While all countries in the world today are involved in the illegal trade of antiquities, they do not all agree with trying to stop it. How does this affect the validity of the legislation in place? Legislation cannot work properly if there are some countries that do not ratify or join in the convention. Even though UNESCO's legislation has lowered the total number of illegally traded antiquities on the black market in some countries, the amount has increased in others (Schuster 2005: 10f). Antiquities trade legislation has not been applied by all countries yet. However, for '... any international legislation to succeed, it is mandatory that all nations, participate in its enforcement. Otherwise, the illicit trade will simply shift to nonsignatory nations!' (Schuster 2005: 13), as has in fact been the case.

UNESCO legislation has a lot of loopholes that looters, smugglers and dealers can exploit. With a knowledge of the legislation it is possible to see that these 'shortcuts' are being used all the time.⁶ One of these is connected to the devastation looting creates: the UNESCO legislation can only be applied to objects with a known appearance, and relies on individual countries to report thefts immediately. This means that objects that have been looted, and which we cannot describe in a precise manner, can easily slip through security checks. There is almost always a middle country, such as England or Switzerland, which is frequently involved in the smuggling chain,⁷ where the traces can be erased and false papers produced in order to be able to import the objects to a third destination, and there to sell them (Prescott 2007: 368).

Another loophole involves the situation where an object is bought in good faith in a so-called middle country but happens to be illegal, yet it can still be sold and exhibited even once the origin of the object has been discovered. This is a form of 'object laundering' and it works because of international Civil Law Codes (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 33) dictating that the title of a stolen object should be decided according to the law of the country in which the transaction took place, and not where the object was recovered (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 33; Brodie & Doole, 2001: 2). In *The Medici Conspiracy: The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums*, written by Watson and Todeschini in 2006 the authors reveal that in several instances, suspicion and knowledge of illicit activities have not been reported to the authorities. In some cases, curators even warned dealers that law enforcement was on the trail of specific objects (Prescott 2007: 368, Watson and Todeschini 2006). All these activities are ruled by understandings of secrecy and non-disclosure between all those involved, including museum personnel, and this for protection of themselves (Elia 1997: 87).

According to ICOM (1970) '... objects should never be accumulated solely for their commercial value.' It is however often the case that it comes down to the monetary value of antiquities. A unique object means higher value, whereas an informative object does not have to be beautiful or monetarily valuable to be important to archaeologists. Cuno for example thinks that loss of the archaeological record is a small price to pay for the enlargement of a museum's collections (Atwood 2008). New objects will keep appearing on the market until collectors, dealers and museums refuse to buy unprovenanced

artefacts (Brodie *et al.* 2000: 25). What has to change is not only the legislation but also the perspectives on antiquities held by those people who oppose stopping the trade. There needs to be more awareness about the illicit trade of antiquities, and not only in the media but also between academics whereby this comes to be regarded as antisocial behaviour. Also, the honoured position of in society must be changed due to the fact that it is these collectors who encourage, to a large extent, the illicit trade of antiquities by not requiring their objects to be provenanced (Elia 1997: 97).

Local or Global History?

Archaeologists produce knowledge that is not only intimately intertwined with their own social positions, but also politically charged... As a practice that is rooted within the broader field of past and present colonialism, the intellectual dissemination and representation of archaeological knowledge inevitably involve political decisions that may feed into political processes of domination. ‘Innocence’ is not a possibility... (Starzmann 2008: 370)

When entering the heated discussion about illegally traded antiquities one finds that the arguments used by the opposing sides use either local or global history perspectives. Both sides include archaeologists, indigenous people, looters, collectors and the public, and both feel they are the rightful owners of illegally traded antiquities (Cameron 1997: 68), and that whatever they are doing to get hold of the antiquities is for the greater good – to save the antiquities. What is interesting is that they are always saving the antiquities from each other (see Elia 1997; Brodie *et al.* 2001; Schuster 2005; Mire 2007). The local side wants to save the antiquities from their region or home country and want all or most objects situated abroad to be brought home. The global side, however, wants to spread knowledge of human history to all corners of the world, with the belief that if a particular country or region is limiting the location of objects to their original area, then the administration of the country or region is working against the interests of greater humanity. Without sharing knowledge of the past the global side will also see a decline of foreign acceptance. These two opposing sides are not so much ‘saving’ the objects from each other, but rather attempting to exert control over the past. They do not see the possibility of an in-betweenness, such as sharing and exchanging objects over shorter periods.

It would be naïve to simply say that local populations in a society should have the right to actually be in control of the antiquities that were found in their area. With today’s globalisation, a modern population may not have any connection to the previous inhabitants. At the same time, cultural heritage scholars cannot limit themselves by preventing people who want to contribute to knowledge of their society’s past from doing so. Scholars must be aware that one does not have to grow up within a society to be interested in it, and country borders change with time. We might ask ourselves why a country far away from the country of origin of an antiquity should be the custodian of it? We might also ask, why should not a museum far away be able to exhibit the antiquity, and if not for long, for a little while.

The global history perspective highlights the fact that all people have a stake in what has happened in the past. We have all been affected by human invention and have influenced one another in many different ways. As Les Hiatt, a past president of the Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies has stated, ‘all human remains are the heritage of all humankind’ (in Gosden 2001: 254). However, at the same time I believe that it is important to think back on the history of archaeology because scholars cannot explore without knowing our own place in history (Webster 2001: 330). Cultural objects can be powerful means of economic exploitation and military suppression (Dommelen 2005: 113) and have been during recent times, for example the actions of the Nazi party during the Second World War and more recently the looting and plundering of Iraq’s museums and archaeological sites. Most of these stolen objects have ended up in museums in the United States and United Kingdom, countries that are colonizers in one way or another.⁸ In all of these cases ownership of antiquities has meant power of one over the Other.

One of the main reasons why local history has become so important is that it gives local populations a basis for the creation of an identity or national self (Mire 2007: 60). The ability to construct their own past is a vital precondition for being able to resurrect their existing culture in the present (Gosden 2001: 249). In one way both local and global arguments are based on nationalism; the global history side wants to enjoy the antiquities of a ‘weaker’ country, thus contributing to the sense of strength of their own country through possession of unique and extraordinary objects from ancient cultures. The Iraqi antiquities that suddenly appeared on the market during the war of 2003 demonstrate the deliberate neglect and destruction of heritage that serves as a geopolitical strategy of cultural imperialism (Starzmann 1997: 376).

I do not believe that either the local or the global history perspective is the better to work with, and neither would I say that scholars cannot work with both perspectives at the same time. Of course localities need to control their history but that does not mean that the global history perspective has to be omitted. Allowing countries of origin to control where antiquities should be held, in cases where illegally traded objects have a known origin, will result in the country of origin being the custodian of those antiquities should they wish to be. However, the museum of origin should also contribute to the global history perspective by accepting exchange, lending and borrowing from other and non-local museums. While all people are part of a single global history, we also need our own local histories in order to better understand our personal origins.

Conclusion – the Link Between Abstract Concepts and Illegally Traded Antiquities in Museums

Illegal traded antiquities travel through time and space, meeting one culture after another, being assigned different kinds of importance and ending up in disputes between various organisations and individuals. These objects ‘speak’ to us in one way or another regardless of the distance in space or time (Cornell *et al.* 2002: 23). They do this through the traces connected to them, although these traces may not be visible if the context they once were in is lost (*ibid.* 2002: 28).

The destruction of heritage sites and its results are nothing that we as archaeologists like to deal with.⁹ However, we do have to deal with these situations, and to make the best out of available resources. Gosden suggests that today the world is still affected by colonial thoughts and issues, and that future research therefore needs new forms of perspectives and discussions (Gosden 2001: 242). Cultural heritage scholars cannot continue to allow the theft of other countries' heritage, and as such we need to see ourselves as collectives or agents in constant encounters, sharing the same time and space (Dommelen 2005: 140). Both the global and local parties' beliefs about who the rightful owners of antiquities are and about who should control the past and the present are affected by nationalistic thoughts (Gosden 2001: 249). Why should one nation, country or state control the past and the present of another? That is not an act going towards globalisation but rather an act that goes back to colonisation.

Some museums world-wide still contribute to illicit trade. As concluded above, without demand there would be no market, and less illicit trade of antiquities, which would in turn lead to a decrease in looting of heritage sites. What we need to do in these cases is to be open to all archaeological possibilities. The possibilities that I have brought up in this paper are: involving the public to see if they can contribute with knowledge concerning objects, their method of construction or area of use, returning antiquities to their country of origin, and comparing them with similar objects when possible.¹⁰ Objects are best researched in their country of origin, because being in the environment in which the object was created, enables greater understanding of its location and possible history. This also results in better access to resources and people that might assist with research into looted objects. This research does not have to be done by local academics, but it is good for foreign academics to cooperate with local scholars and laymen (and vice versa).

Another way of opening up possibilities is the use of microarchaeology, where feasible. This does not put the object or study of a subject in a wider comparative situation. By following an object's 'threads' and 'fibres' you can then discover its history. Even though much of this history may have been erased, leaving only the traces of the journey during illicit trade, this is still an interesting history to present. As all antiquities have a past yet are in constant contact with contemporary people, cultures and situations, the journey from then until now, surviving possible destruction, is an interesting story to present in museums.

I believe that it is important to propagate knowledge about how antiquities, both legally and illegally traded, have ended up in museums. This knowledge is worth presenting not only because all objects in an exhibition have been selected for one or more reasons, but also because it can be used to dispel a visitor impression that these objects have never been handled by people, when viewed in an unreachable position in the sterile, empty context of a glass display. To the visitor they may look old, but have they actually been used by past peoples and why are they so important for us today? Museums rarely explain to visitors how their artefacts ended up there (see also Gustafsson 2009). If

there is any information in a museum concerning its objects, it is mostly where they were discovered. Why they were chosen and how they came to the exhibition and what is special about them is very rarely mentioned. However, if museum curators were to present each object's history, then these objects would not only give light to the historical period they came from but also to the contemporary world. An object's history could include information such as where it was found, which preservation treatment it has received, if it has been stored for many years and where, what its use was, what analysis of it can tell us, and why it was especially chosen for exhibition in this particular museum and not somewhere else. While illegally obtained objects with no provenance are seen by many archaeologists and museologists as objects with "limited scientific value" (Kankpeyeng & DeCorse, 2004: 105), I believe this is incorrect. Looted objects can sometimes give those interested even more information than a documented object can, although a different type of information and more about contemporary situations than past ones.

This paper has asked why a country far away from an object's point of origin should be the custodian of that item, and also why should it not be? I believe that it is important to both support the local history as well as the global history. It is thus not wrong for a museum with antiquities, once taken illegally, to display them and allow visitors to enjoy them. As no museum can display its entire inventory, with many objects in storage, why not let other museums display them? It is a positive thing for museums or governments to come to agreements to exchange objects either for other objects or for other services or equipment (ICOM Recommendations).

Scholars cannot allow local communities to keep their knowledge for themselves, and neither can they allow other countries take that knowledge through illegal acts. We need to find an 'in-between' atmosphere where local connections and interests can be involved in a global network (Bhabha 1994; Dommelen 1997: 118). Western countries were the first to explore archaeological sites around the world, and it is mostly in the West that illegally traded antiquities today are bought and sold. As we should not view a cultural group or their antiquities as something homogenous, we also should not limit the movement of archaeological objects, both the legally and illegally acquired, by constraining them to a single collector or museum. We need to find the third space, as Bhabha (1994) suggests, to be able to find that common ground where knowledge of common world cultural heritage can be shared (Fahlander 2007). The borders of today should not prevent the spread of this knowledge, but also not result in uneven distribution due to national power relations. We should, rather, use different perspectives to let all the unattended traces to come to light.

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Notes

- 1 I assume that there is no proof of the original idea for an ancient object.
- 2 Somalia has lost many objects and knowledge of its historical past lasting recent centuries., Many objects have disappeared to abroad with foreign academics and researchers. For further reading see: Mire 2007.
- 3 Illegally traded objects can tell us about how the illegal trade operated, how ancient objects can effect people in today's society, how often perspectives on life can change over time, how adaptable humans are, and how easily we can change our ideas and behaviour in relation to a particular object.
- 4 The northern parts of Sweden, called Norrland in Swedish, account for about 59% of Sweden's total area.
- 5 Not everything archaeologists find during excavation is what we today consider to be aesthetically pleasing. One has to wonder what happens to all those objects that might not sell well on the black market, but still might have been important for archaeologist analysis and research. In these cases the looting and plundering of museums and sites equals total destruction in terms of further research.
- 6 The US army managed to smuggle large numbers of artefacts during the war in Iraq without any problems. These then showed up in multiple museums all around the world (Polk 2005).
- 7 See Prescott 2007 for further reading.
- 8 The examples show the way military powers can manage to get hold of historical narratives and their material in order to demonstrate and realize economic claims (Starzmann 2008: 373, 376).
- 9 We do need to deal with destroyed sites, so that we do not lose more information than we already have about the ancient past. This can be achieved through greater cooperation, the use of different research perspectives, and by treating everybody with equal respect.
- 10 Comparison is not always a good idea and similarities with another object should never be worth more than other analysis results, but comparing objects does not only mean that similarities are what one is looking for, as differentiations can give us more usable information in some circumstances.

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