

**RULING CULTURE: TOMB ROBBERS, STATE POWER,  
AND THE STRUGGLE FOR ITALIAN ANTIQUITIES**

by

**Fiona Anne Rose Greenland**

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy  
(Sociology)  
in the University of Michigan  
2014**

Doctoral Committee:

Associate Professor Geneviève Zubrzycki, chair  
Professor Fatma Müge Göçek  
Assistant Professor Robert S. Jansen  
Professor Nicola Terrenato

## Acknowledgments

This project was made possible by generous gifts of time, money, advice, and moral support from colleagues, institutions, friends, and family.

The Social Science Research Council (USA) funded my fieldwork in Italy and England in 2011-2012. Additional, equally important fieldwork time was supported by the International Institute (2013) and the Rackham School of Graduate Studies, both at the University of Michigan (2010, 2012); and by the University of Michigan's Department of Sociology (2010, 2013).

Financial support covered travel and accommodation; institutional support facilitated my thinking, writing, and accessing data. In Oxford, the Institute for Science, Innovation, and Society in the Department of Anthropology (Oxford University) hosted me as a Visiting Fellow in Autumn 2012, welcoming me into the family and giving me space to share my research, conduct interviews, and access the magisterial holdings of the Bodleian Library. In Rome, the British School (BSR) kindly housed and splendidly fed me in summer 2013.

Many libraries and institutions helped me to find invaluable archival material and secondary literature. For their patient help, I thank the archivists and librarians at the Archivio di Stato di Roma, the Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale di Roma (BNCR), the Istituto Archeologico Germanico (Rome), the American Academy in Rome, the Library of the Camera dei Deputati (Rome), and the British School at Rome. In Ann Arbor, the Italian studies librarian at the Hatcher Graduate Library, Beau Case, helped me procure Italian-language books that were hard to find outside of Italy.

In the course of this project I spent time at three excavation sites in Italy. My time in the trenches was invaluable to the formation of my thinking about the dissertation project and the complexities of archaeological knowledge and the meaning of antiquities. For this, I thank the directors and team members of the digs at Gabii (Lazio), Poggio Civitate (Siena), and Coriglia/Orvieto (Umbria).

I am fortunate to have the best colleagues in the world. At the University of Michigan, fellow graduate students provided ideas, helpful feedback, inspiration, and also laughter, commiseration, and warm companionship. I give thanks to Dan Hirschman, Elizabeth Armstrong, José Bortoluci, Jamie Budnick, Patricia Chen, Amy Cooter, Mariana Craciun, Mathieu Desan, Meagan Elliott, Camilo Leslie, Zakiya Luna, Atef Said, Claire Whitlinger, Elizabeth Young, and Beatriz Zengotitabengoa for friendship and unstinting support.

I have incurred debts of gratitude to many scholars at several institutions. Geneviève Zubrzycki supervised my dissertation and did so much more. Her incisive observations profoundly influenced my approach to the study of culture and nationalism, while her precise and supportive criticism on the dissertation, from embryonic proposal to finished product, greatly enhanced its quality and nuance. Müge Göçek read chapters, brainstormed with me, and encouraged me over endless cups of tea and plates of Turkish sweets. Rob Jansen pushed me to think more carefully and precisely about theories of states and culture, and it was through our long discussions that I embraced my capacity to generate new social theory. Nic Terrenato sparked my interest in the project in the first place, encouraging me to dig with his team at Gabii and discussing the complexities of this sphere through many office hours visits back in Ann Arbor. Through stimulating conversations and the Michigan Social Theory seminar, George Steinmetz helped me see the interrelations of power and identity in the field of antiquities. Amir

Baghdadchi read drafts and commented perceptively, always finding a twist or a puzzle in my data and encouraging me to think anew and, above all, to write with clarity and decisiveness.

Anthropologists, archaeologists, art historians, classicists, historians, and sociologists on two continents provided feedback on chapters, or offered insights into my project that greatly helped my analysis. Jeffrey Alexander, Isabella Clough Marinaro, Bruno Currie, Mira Debs, Jas Elsner, Lene Faust, Dario Gaggio, Peter Galison, Elaine Gazda, Patty Gerstenblith, Tracey Heatherington, Michael Herzfeld, Ian Hodder, Caroline Jones, Krishan Kumar, Richard Lachmann, Milena Melfi, Alfonso Moreno, Davide Orsini, and Anthony Tuck: thank you, all of you, for your feedback, questions, and inspiration.

All errors are my responsibility.

My family members deserve gold medals, all of them, for their love and support. As though cheering me on through the first doctoral degree wasn't enough, they enthusiastically cheered me on through the second. I regret that my grandparents died before I completed this dissertation. May their memory be eternal.

Will, Alasdair, and Abigail: I dedicate this work to you.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements .....	ii
List of Images.....	vi
List of Appendices.....	vii
List of Abbreviations .....	viii
Abstract .....	ix
CHAPTER	
1. Introduction .....	1
2. Historical antecedents and the path to nationalized culture in Italy .....	40
3. <i>Patria</i> and Repatriation: The Myth of Family in Cultural Power .....	88
4. The Consolidation of Expertise: Knowing the Nation through Antiquities .....	136
5. Tomb Robbers and the Margins of National Culture .....	184
6. Conclusion.....	222
APPENDICES.....	237
Bibliography.....	251

## List of Images

### IMAGE

1. Unveiling the Euphronios *krater* at the Ministry of Culture 247
2. Officers from the Syracuse office of the Tutela del Patrimonio 247
3. Press conference announcing the success of “Operazione Tomb Raiders” 248
4. Two *carabinieri* inspect the archaeological site of Rocca di Entella (Sicily) 249
5. Cover image from Gustavo Strafforello’s *La Patria: Geografia dell’Italia* 250

## **List of Appendices**

### APPENDIX

A. Methodology: Data Collection and Analytical Strategies	237
B. Table of Nationalization Legislation	244
C. Images	245

## **List of Abbreviations**

ACS	Archivio Centrale dello Stato (Central State Archives)
Camera	Camera dei Deputati (Chamber of Deputies of the Italian Parliament)
Codice	Codice dei Beni Culturali e del paesaggio (Legal Code for Cultural Treasures and Landscape, maintained by MiBAC)
DC	Democrazia Cristiana (Christian Democrats)
DLgs	Decreto legislativo (Legal decree, the formal system of referring to specific Italian laws)
MiBAC	Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (Ministry for Cultural Resources and Activities)
NTPA	Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Artistico (forerunner to the TPC)
TPC	Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale (Police Command Unit for the Protection of Cultural Patrimony); referred to colloquially as the Art Squad



## Abstract

Ancient artifacts and ruins are evocative symbols of modern Italy. Long subject to contingent valuations, ranging from hostility and active destruction to romanticization and ardent protection, antiquities are now fiercely contested resources for state power, scientific expertise, and cultural identity. Employing ethnographic, historical, material, and institutional methods, this dissertation shows how these domains of authority come together to constitute what I call *cultural power*. Beginning with the rediscovery of Pompeii in the late 18th century and the heated turf wars and intellectual disputes that it generated, I trace the historical process that led, in 1909, to the nationalization of all legally defined antiquities in or from the Italian soil. After the collapse of the Napoleonic regime in Italy in 1814, elected officials, scholars, and connoisseurs led civic-level efforts to repatriate artworks stolen by the French and to protect the artworks and monuments left intact. The *difesa dell'arte* movement began as a traditional guardianship exercise and ended, some six decades later, as a revolutionary program for asserting public ownership over ancient treasures. That revolutionary program is now widely admired and copied. The nationalization of Italian antiquities offered a blueprint for other nation-states which sought to assert control over the circulation of ancient objects and ruins – key symbolic resources.

The core finding in the dissertation is that cultural power is a distinct sphere of state power that is constituted by control over sites, objects, and practices but is not limited to the cultural sphere. Drawing on theories and methods from sociology, cultural anthropology, art history, and legal studies, I ask why the current framework for antiquities nationalization took

shape the way it did, and what effect it has on the ways that people “know” the common national past. The reclassification of antiquities as state property was a crucial, early event in the amassing of cultural power in Italy. The 1969 establishment of the world’s first art crimes police unit (the “Art Squad”) extended Italian cultural power to repatriation practices, a key praxis in which nation-states’ heritage programs conflict and compete. A decades-long campaign against unauthorized excavators, known as “tomb robbers” (*tombaroli* in Italian) flexes cultural power at home, a project that is undergirded by a stark binary narrative that puts unauthorized excavators on the wrong side of both law and the *patria*. Cultural power also impacts nationhood epistemology. The confluence of science, state administration, and archaeological mysticism promotes a new mode of experience with Italy’s ancient past: indexical history, in which antiquities configure as quantifiable “wins”, as contrasted with iconic history, which narrated the past through select, sacralized images and objects. Key scholarly contributions of my project are clarification of the relationship between state power, science, and culture by transcending the traditional scholarly distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism; original ethnographic data that complicate existing scholarly views on looting and the illicit antiquities trade; and a material-focused agenda for studying the relationship between state and nation.

## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

The “world’s greatest cultural power” – that is how Carlo Azeglio Ciampi, then-President of the Italian Republic, described Italy in an interview with an Italian magazine in 2004.<sup>1</sup> The context of Ciampi’s remark was a discussion about state allocation of resources to protect cultural heritage sites and objects. The President had other phrases available to him. He could have referred to the Italian people’s cultural patrimony (*patrimonio*), or to the archaeological legacy of cultural treasures (*beni culturali*). Indeed, state officials, archaeologists, and ordinary Italians use these terms frequently. Ciampi’s words of choice, “Italia è la potenza culturale più grande del mondo”, echoed *potenza militare* (“military power”) and *potenza industriale* (“industrial power”), two phrases frequently invoked in political discourse in contemporary Italy. “Cultural power”, however, is not interchangeable with military and industrial power, nor is it a direct substitute for *patrimonio* or *beni culturali*. Ciampi used “cultural power” as a substantive description of the nation. In doing so, he situated Italy in a sphere of nation-state activity that features its own specific stakes and tensions, and claimed Italy’s supremacy over that sphere.

Politicians say provocative things. Every national community has its points of pride, its boasts and “branding” (Aronczyk 2013; Rivera 2008). Is Ciampi’s claim anything different? He was known, during his seven-year term (1999-2006), as a mild-mannered patrician. A highly educated and wealthy banker with an honorary law degree from Oxford University, Ciampi

---

<sup>1</sup> Throughout the dissertation, translations from the Italian are my own unless otherwise noted.

generally shied from bombastic rhetoric and stuck to technical analyses of the state's financial system and import tariffs. But Ciampi also had a penchant for nationalistic displays, in a way that was out of step with mainstream Italian society's tendency to shirk from overtly patriotic acts. He insisted that the Italian tricolor be displayed at state functions, for example, and encouraged Italians to participate in patriotic parades and tend monuments of national heroes. Ciampi's "cultural power" comment came in 2004, but to gain analytical leverage on it we need to consider an episode from four years later.

Ciampi encouraged Italians to sing the national anthem, frequently and enthusiastically, at formal ceremonies and informal gatherings. It was his fondness for this anthem, known as the Hymn of Mameli (*L'Inno di Mameli*), written in 1859 by a pro-unification partisan, which landed Ciampi in hot water. Umberto Bossi, leader of the Northern League (*Lega Nord*), a separatist party in northern Italy that seeks to declare independence from the rest of Italy, vociferously rejected Ciampi's call for nationwide anthem singing. He did so on grounds that the lyrics insult Italian citizens who question the state's power over their lives. Specifically, Bossi objected to the Hymn's last three lines:

Le porga la chioma,	(Let her bow down,
Ché schiava di Roma	Slave of Rome
Iddio la creò.	God has made.)

The lyrics originally meant that Rome's military prowess was so exceptional that Victory herself should bow down in front of it. "Roma" stood for the personification of the ancient city of Rome, as well as the city that was then emerging as the capital of the fledgling nation-state. But Bossi argued that many Italians perceived *themselves* as slaves of Rome, modern Italy's bureaucratic nerve center and (for some) a despised symbol of state malfunction and corruption. His one-

fingering salute to Ciampi spurred the President to defend his patriotic vision in an interview with the national newspaper *La Repubblica*:

The national anthem is always a reflection of the past times in which it was written. [But] I believe that you need to have respect for the institutions [*istituzioni*] in their forms. I think of the [Monument of] Vittoriano. It's old, yes. But so what? Many people like it a lot. For others, it does nothing for them. So then what? Want to knock it down? Let's not forget that the Eiffel Tower, when it was made, was said to be ugly and would soon be demolished. [...] And now imagine the French capital without the Tower. Or Italy without the *Mameli*.<sup>2</sup>

Civil, if tepid, relations were soon restored between Ciampi and Bossi, and the press turned to other news items. The scandal over the national anthem faded from the front pages. But the cultural and political currents that carried it to prominence in the first place continue to spill into the crevices of public life. For over a century, Italian citizens and state officials have struggled to write a narrative of nationhood that contends with a tangle of historical, cultural, and ideological threads. Writing a narrative of nationhood is not simply a literary exercise. In dead practical terms, it is a contest for resources, access to power, and the juridical vision of the future. As Hooper-Greenhill notes, a nation's "master narrative" of its history acts as "the constructor of present day 'reality' [...] through bringing into focus a memory of the past that (coincidentally) supports the present" (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 25). The struggle for narrative authority comes to a head at certain historical junctures, such as the two world wars and their attendant civil unrests, and the violent fights between Communists and neo-Fascists in the *Anni di Piombo* ("Years of Lead," shorthand for the political unrest of the 1960s and 1970s). The "slave of Rome" dispute, I

---

<sup>2</sup> "Lo sconcerto di Ciampi. 'Che errore colpire i simboli'," *La Repubblica* 20 June 2008. Interview conducted by Giorgio Battistini. <http://www.repubblica.it/2008/07/sezioni/politica/giustizia-8/ciampi-bossi/ciampi-bossi.html> (Link accessed March 29, 2014.)

suggest, was an index of the most recent such juncture – one that is still playing itself out. It is within this context that Ciampi’s claim about cultural power must be understood.

What differentiates the current juncture from those prior to it is state officials’ intense focus on cultural objects and sites. More specifically, state actors’ invocation of two fashionable, hot button issues – patrimony and cultural heritage – draw attention away from potentially objectionable uses of power. The discourse of cultural protection is now so powerful and pervasive that to question the state’s system of controlling antiquities and other national “treasures” is to consign oneself to intellectual purgatory. A prominent speaker at a November 2012 conference in Rome put it this way: “You have to be a cold-hearted SOB not to want to help protect art. And as I see it, the only ones who do it right are the detectives and police officers who track down stolen art and arrest the thieves.”<sup>3</sup>

Sons-of-bitches and thieves versus law enforcement officials; heartless enemies of culture against art’s dedicated guardians. Here, bluntly yet clearly, is the dominant framing of cultural power. Italy, we are told, is in an epic struggle against parasitical tomb robbers and greedy foreign collectors. At stake is the lifeblood of the Italian nation. In this bleak space there is only one possible moral choice: to obey state law, support the police, and file reports on neighbors who break the law by misusing nationalized cultural objects. The former Scotland Yard detective who spoke at the conference was less eloquent with his words than Ciampi might have been, but both men mobilize the same discourse. When Ciampi claimed in 2004 that Italy is the world’s greatest cultural power, he was continuing a discursive form that has, since the closing decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, profoundly shaped the Italian nation. The ideology embedded in that discourse, concretized now in laws, bureaucratic procedures, cultural institutions, and scientific

---

<sup>3</sup> “Transnational Organized Crime: Italian Connections,” conference at the American University at Rome. November 23, 2012. The speaker was Charles Hill, former detective with the art crimes unit of New Scotland Yard.

rituals, has set new parameters for what constitutes the nation's culture, who has authority over it, and who may lay claim to it.

This dissertation is, in part, a study of that phenomenon. Focusing on the period 1860 to the present, I analyze the process whereby authority over archaeological artifacts – and especially those artifacts conventionally known as *antiquities* – was increasingly concentrated in state institutions and in state-endorsed experts. In generating this form of power, the state made itself. Antiquities, referred to in official documents first as *cose d'arte* (artistic objects), then as *beni culturali* (cultural treasures or goods), sparked the first attempts by the Italian nation-state to govern cultural practices and products systematically. Along with the organization and control of soldiers and military materiel, the census, and taxation, antiquities received early and intense attention by state officials (Patriarca 1996; Riall 2009; on antiquities specifically: Ceserani 2012; Troilo 2005). The reasons for this are complex. As I explain in the second chapter, antiquities constituted a political lightning rod because they touched on sensitive issues including localism, class differences, Italy's place in Europe, and foreigners' involvement in major Italian cultural institutions. Italian politicians and state bureaucrats sparred over the appropriate role for the state in dealing with antiquities, but they agreed that the state needed to engage with the matter somehow.

In 1909, King Vittorio Emanuele III, acting on the majority vote of members of the *Camera dei Deputati* (Chamber of Deputies), approved a law that would nationalize antiquities (DLgs [*Decreto legislativo*] 1909/364).<sup>4</sup> Henceforth, all “immoveable and moveable objects” made fifty years prior or more, “in the ground and above it, having a historical, archaeological,

---

<sup>4</sup> DLgs is the standard abbreviation for *Decreto legislativo*, a legislative measure passed by the Camera dei Deputati and adopted by the executive power to give the measure force of law. Thus, DLgs 42/2004 refers to law (or decree) number 42, passed in 2004. For archival accuracy, I will use the Italian system of legal reference rather than an English translation throughout the dissertation.

and artistic interest to the nation” were presumed to be state property (DLgs 1909/364: Article 1). It was a dramatic move, a compromise hard-won in spite of violent disputes among and between elected officials, scholars, professional antiquarians, wealthy private collectors, and public intellectuals. The antiquities nationalization law has been expanded, redefined, and clarified at various points since, but the core of the 1909 legislation is intact. As my dissertation will explain, nationalizing antiquities is a complicated, unfinished endeavor. Setting forth legal definitions of protected objects is one thing. Enforcing those definitions, and making people understand and believe in them, is quite another.

Nation-states employ different means of enforcing cultural protection laws. In Italy, the solution is found in an elite military-police corps. Since 1969, with the creation of the Art Squad – the world’s first police unit dedicated specifically to enforcing cultural patrimony laws – the Italian government has recovered some half a million cultural objects from foreign institutions as well as private collectors, dealers, and looters--foreign and Italian. Nearly 30,000 people were tried and convicted of crimes against art and archaeology in the same time period.<sup>5</sup> Men and women convicted of such crimes in Italian courts face fines and prison time. Clearly, something important is happening at the intersection of cultural objects and state authority.

Institutional arrangements and legal systems are insufficient to make sense of the core inquiry, however. I ask how and *why* Italy came to be seen as a cultural power, in official rhetoric as well as everyday discourse. Scholars who study cultural heritage and histories of patrimony tend to approach this topic by asserting that the answer to the question, “Why is there

---

<sup>5</sup> These figures come from the Art Squad’s 2012 presentation in Philadelphia in autumn 2012. Pers. Comm. Dr. Laurie Rush, Cultural Resources Manager, Fort Drum, New York. These figures are consistent with published reports and public presentations by TPC staff including “Presentazione attività operativa 2012”, delivered in Rome by Gen.B. Mariano Mossa (23 April 2013).



cultural power?” is “Because there are cultural treasures” – objects whose social and cultural worth is self-evident.<sup>6</sup> This approach confuses the explanans with the explanandum. Rather than taking for granted objects’ “interest to the nation,” as the 1909 law put it, I examine how and why certain objects were selected for state protection, which is tantamount to a starring role in the discourse of nationhood. My question, then, is, “Why are there cultural treasures?” The answer is that there is cultural power. State actors and a constellation of allies (some willing, some unwitting), including archaeologists, university professors, antiquarians, artists, poets, priests, geographers, and cartographers, made artifacts into antiquities. These were not just any artifacts, however. Objects associated with the Roman Republican and early Roman Imperial eras (roughly, 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to 4<sup>th</sup> century AD), and to a lesser extent Etruscan (5<sup>th</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC), were polished by scholars, collectors, officials, and hobbyists as the jewel in the crown of the nation’s patrimony. The specific features of Italy’s ancient material legacy are crucial to this construction. My argument is not that Italy’s antiquities are superior to others’ and therefore *cause* cultural power. Italy’s claim to be the greatest cultural power stems from a combination of its symbolically potent mix of iconic peoples and periods (Etruria, Rome, early Christian, Renaissance), and a long history of European elites mythologizing, idolizing, and robbing Italian antiquities (Casillo 2006; Ceserani & Milanese 2007).

For this reason I do not limit myself to an institutionalist examination of cultural power and nationalism. Rather, I take seriously the significance of artifacts themselves in this process, which means that I rely on close analysis of the objects’ appearance, images, form, function, provenance, and symbolism to understand how bits and pieces get sorted out and selected for

---

<sup>6</sup> This view recurs throughout UNESCO and UNESCO-sponsored volumes on heritage protection. In the academic literature, see, among others: Ridley 2009, who assumes throughout his book that when ancient objects and monuments are damaged the Italian people are “harmed”; and Arantes 2007, whose interest is in tensions between the market and heritage protection but who does not question the supposed intrinsic significance of heritage itself.

scientization, state regulation, and nationalization. The particularities of the artifacts' "objectness" are not interchangeable. To borrow from Chandra Mukerji, the heart of nationhood and state formation alike lies in the shape of objects (Mukerji 1983: 261). Through marble sculptures, painted vases, tumbledown temples and silver *denarii*, ideology and cultural identity are embedded in matter, making history seem tangible and incontrovertible.

### **Cultural Power: The case of Italy**

Italy offers a compelling case for the investigation of cultural power. Italy is not the only nation with a claim to cultural supremacy, of course. Egyptian, Greek, Iraqi, Chinese, and Indian antiquities (among others) are also renowned by scholars, collectors, tourists, and statesmen for their historic significance and aesthetic beauty. Contemporary experts and officials in each of those countries speak of their cultural treasures in much the same way that Ciampi spoke of Italy's: as great, grand, and unique (Goode 2007; Hamilakis 2007; Tong 1995). Each of these countries, too, lays claim to being a civilizational heartland.

What sets Italy apart from competitor civilizational heartlands, however, is that Italy is a pioneer in the bureaucratic arts of cultural power. The 1909 antiquities law post-dated similar measures taken by governing bodies in Greece (1826) and Egypt (1859), but it was the first such law to be backed up by systematic enforcement and punitive measures (see Appendix B). Italian archaeologists were not the first in their discipline to associate specific artifact types with individual nationhood, but they established methodological and rhetorical practices that paved the way for nationalist archaeology in other countries, and in this way they served as cultural as well as scientific entrepreneurs (Ceserani 2012). The Art Squad, finally, is the Italian government's most salient innovation in the sphere of cultural power. The Art Squad model is actively exported by the Carabinieri, whose officers conduct training sessions for governmental

counterparts in other countries – most visibly, Nasiryah Province in Iraq in 2003 (Rush & Benedettini 2012).

On the face of it, then, Italy is one of a handful of countries with an impressive stock of antiquities and ruins from a celebrated past civilization. Indeed, there are at least fourteen modern nation-states with sizeable collections of antiquities, monuments, and ruined cities from the period of Roman occupation. To understand why these other ruins-rich countries have not become contemporary cultural powerhouses – why they did not create the first Art Squad or establish the blueprint for cultural protection laws or accrue more than half of UNESCO's World Heritage Sites – we need to dig deeper into the case. The answer lies in a complex of historical and social factors that have long constructed Italy as simultaneous cultural center and political periphery (Casillo 2006; Chambers 2008; Lombardi-Diop & Romani 2013).

### **Ruling Culture: Theoretical Soundings**

Scholars of state power tend to relegate cultural objects to the margins of theorizing. Wars, assassinations, coronations, epidemics, and treaties serve as the real engines of nation-state formation. When artworks, artifacts, and monuments surface in this literature, they complement or illustrate the truly important episodes or actors. There are exceptions to this rule, of course, and I will discuss them later in this chapter. What is important to highlight here is the centrality of antiquities to my study of cultural power. This is not the result of an arbitrary and subjective choice. Any thorough and penetrative analysis of cultural power *depends* on objects, monuments, and culturally significant sites. It is a matter not so much of presenting a history of Italy through cultural objects, but rather of presenting the history of Italy. Period. Antiquities have not merely informed political debate and discussion in Italy through the years, they have constituted debate and discussion by establishing parameters of identity and belonging (Capitelli 2003).

Sociologists, archaeologists, and anthropologists offer many ways to think about the concept of cultural objects *constituting* societies. With archaeologist Chris Tilley, for example, one could focus on the relationship between spirituality and cultural environment (Tilley 2004). In line with anthropologist Krisztina Fehérváry (2013) on the other hand, one might examine how the state's imposition of specific building materials and styles on the public landscape of ruins and antiquities shapes collective memories and delimits political efficacy. Tilley opens interesting lines of enquiry but does not provide answers that will sustain a theoretical framework for studying a modern nation-state. Fehérváry's focus on a Communist nation-state provides important insights into the political logic of what we might call a command cultural economy, but that logic differs in crucial ways from that of a democratic nation-state in which heavy government involvement in culture has long been a difficult subject. What needs to be addressed in the present case is antiquities' power to shape both ideas about national belonging and relationships between individuals and the state. In this vein, an important opening concept comes from historian Holger Hoock's (2010) examination of the British Empire's symbolic language of conquest and moral destiny. Hoock uses the idea of *cultural patriotism*, which he defines as follows:

[...] a preference for, and an emotional identification with, one's own country –through the production, promotion, and consumption of specific cultural processes, events, and goods. (Hoock 2010: 12)

Cultural patriotism, thus defined, moves us closer to the theoretical underpinnings of cultural power. In the case of Italy, we are dealing with an intense loyalty to cultural objects of national meaning – a loyalty that is enshrined in law, enforced by the Art Squad, and possibly genuinely felt by many citizens. But where does such loyalty originate? Hoock deploys the idea of cultural patriotism to explain the power of empire to promote certain modes of viewership and aesthetic

appreciation. He does not explain how and why individuals feel connected to the wider collective, if they did, nor why some objects, sites, and symbols failed to engender cultural patriotism. Cultural patriotism must be taught, and the objects of devotion identified and promoted. As Agulhon (1981) reminds us, the consumption of national materiality and symbols, too, is political. In Italy, state officials and scholars have historically played an active role in this work. Notwithstanding the analytical potential of Hooock's cultural patriotism for this study, in order to use it here we need to step back and examine the political, economic, and social forces that have for centuries conditioned people how to think about antiquities.

### **Ancient heartland at the margins of modernity: Deprovincializing Italy**

Since at least the early Renaissance, scholars, state officials, connoisseurs, and laypeople have promulgated a *master cultural narrative* that rests on two key beliefs. The first is that there is a unified, tangible body of sites, objects, and monuments that is unmistakably Italian (Settis 2007; Troilo 2005). The second is that Italy is the most culturally rich nation in the world. In terms of quality, volume, and historical importance, the Italian nation's body of cultural sites, objects, and monuments is discursively structured as surpassing other nations'.<sup>7</sup> A staple of popular culture is the claim that Italy has "the world's largest heritage of cultural treasures."<sup>8</sup> Newspapers and state officials offer statistics attesting to this. When Italian classical archaeologist and cultural critic

---

<sup>7</sup> Government officials and tourist boosters are obvious sources of such discourse, as the references in this section and the opening pages attest. But the idea that Italy is especially rich in material culture pervades academic writing as well. In this medium, the specific formulation is that cultural objects and sites are important to the nation-state. This importance is cited as justification for laws and policies directed at controlling cultural objects through central state actors. In an article about looting at Italian archaeological sites, for example, Marín-Aguilera writes: "protection and preservation rules were developed by European countries due to the importance of cultural heritage and history for those nations" (2012: 564). This line of argument assumes that cultural objects are important. Left unexplained is *why* and what sort of materiality is important (and what is not). See also: Isman 2009; and for the classic example: Carandini 1979.

<sup>8</sup> Marco Zambuto, mayor of Agrigento, quoted in Der Spiegel online, 18/4/2012: "Italy hopes sponsoring can save cultural treasures," by Fiona Ehlers.

Salvatore Settis analyzed a range of texts in which Italian public officials asserted a percentage share of world culture, he found that the typical estimate was 40% -- that is, Italy produced 40% of the world's cultural treasures, ranging from monuments to miniatures (Settis 2002: 14). Settis also cited an Italian newspaper article that suggested that Tuscany and Umbria *alone* account for one-fifth of the artistic patrimony of the entire planet. Underpinning the master cultural narrative is a widely shared belief that Italy's cultural patrimony is unique in its longevity. Material longevity of ruins and artifacts is elided with an imagined historical longevity, linking nationhood and Italian destiny (Arthurs 2012).

The master cultural narrative is everywhere: travel guidebooks, museum installations, cookbooks and archaeology TV shows. The pervasiveness of this narrative blurs fact and ideology. Why shouldn't Italy be rated highly for its cultural products? Surely those endless walled towns, cathedral frescoes, Roman temples, and dramatic landscapes add up to something special. The power of the master cultural narrative is two-fold: joining all of these pieces into a single *national* cultural body, and making the ranking and comparing of cultures a normal, natural practice. Whether it is appropriate to compare, say, Stonehenge with the Colosseum or *The Tale of Genji* with Dante's *Commedia* is unremarked. The rules of this game are set by those with access to public speaking platforms and state resources: elected officials, museum heads, civic boosters, and government officers. These actors do not address the possibility that in their selection, quantification, and superlatation of Italian cultural treasures, some bits are excluded.

The origins of the master cultural narrative lie in a specific historical moment: the political and economic decline of the Italian city-states and the rise of northern and northwestern European kingdoms and states. Historians and literary scholars have identified in this moment the intellectual forces that crystallized "Italian culture" as superior while decrying Italy's

political and economic systems as inferior and its people as degenerate (Casillo 2006). I will discuss this phenomenon in more detail in Chapter 2. What I want to emphasize here is the slow but steady historical process whereby Italy was simultaneously centralized and marginalized – made central to European history through its civilizational legacy, yet marginal from contemporary sites of European power owing to perceived character and organizational flaws (Moe 2002).

To newly wealthy northern European elites looking for art investments and classical erudition – the essential ingredients of what Bourdieu would understand as *cultural capital* – Italy was the cultural center (Black 2003). Greece was inaccessible for geographic and political reasons, and the considerable Roman ruins of France and Spain were typically misidentified with other ancient civilizations or simply bracketed by experts as provincial derivatives. By the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Italy’s position as civilizational heartland/political periphery was firmly set. Becoming the world’s greatest cultural power has not altered this position. If anything, the modern Italian state’s cultural laws, institutional procedures, and officials’ rhetoric reinforce it. In the contemporary sphere of cultural markets and heritage politics, boasting “the world’s largest heritage of cultural treasures” essentializes Italy as a *source country*, the disempowered counterpart to the wealthy and influential *destination countries* of northern and western Europe and North America.

The critical distinction between Italy’s being a cultural center while politically peripheral has, for the most part, not transferred successfully from the art historical and literary criticism corpuses to the post-colonial literature, a body of work that deals extensively with culture, power, states, and identity. Bhabha, in *The Location of Culture*, acknowledges Western culture as hybrid and fluid in the colonial space. But Western culture back at home, out of the colony

and in the European center, is glossed as coherent, pre-formed, and dominant (Bhabha 1985). Yet the Italian case – the history and politics of constructing national culture by means of legal codes, punitive measures, and scientific procedures – reveals how “Western culture” even in the European centers comprises multiple voices, differential agency, and suppressed cultural discourses. Cultural objects’ paradox is that they are at once solid yet plastic; enduring, yes, but the flip side of enduring is timeless, and the perception of timelessness primes objects for appropriation and re-presentation according to prevailing political winds. The cultural framework of Rome has, again and again, been “freely shaped to fit current ideological needs” (Terrenato 2001: 87). Close reading of cultural artifacts against the historical background opens a window onto past perceptions and uses of ancient Rome, and allows us to explain how those perceptions arose and why, and how they reproduced power differentials.

In sum, I want to stress the long history of colonialism *within* the Italian peninsula – an internal colonialism that involved formal declarations of foreign powers’ domination (as with Napoleon’s invasion in 1806) but also, more often, informal dominations of cultural meaning and knowledge production (Dickie 1999; Riall 2009; Schneider 1998).<sup>9</sup> In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, as the leaders and citizens of city-states and regions of the Italian peninsula sought to find common ground in the new nation-state, “national culture” was already a hybridization of prior hybrids (to borrow a key term from Bhabha). The fluidity of the construct is captured in Iain Chambers’s phrase “liquid materiality”: the shifting boundaries of “Italian” and “antiquity,” and even what counted as object or ephemera (Chambers 2008). The multiple voices that once made endless local meanings of objects and sites were sifted and compounded into a single, official voice, the language of national cultural treasures or *beni culturali*. Who did the sifting,

---

<sup>9</sup> I do so fully acknowledging Italy’s problematic role as a colonial occupying force in Africa in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



who did the compounding? Who performs this work today? I wrote earlier that cultural power has its own specific stakes and tensions, demarcating it from other forms of state power. The efforts and ideologies of state officials, archaeologists, and unauthorized excavators all play their role, sometimes in harmony but often at odds.

The study of cultural power and the myth of cultural supremacy is not, then, a straightforward story of intensified state control and concomitant majority acquiescence. State officials in *Risorgimento* Italy sketched the blueprint for cultural power, and their experience of internal colonization shaped that blueprint. Tracing the origins of national treasures and of the modes of power that now control them thus requires us to reverse Dipesh Chakrabarty's (2000) enjoinder that we "provincialize Europe" by instead *deprovincializing* Italy within Europe and joining it up with the histories of northern Europe's dominant powers.

### **Theorizing culture and nation in the social scientific literature**

Post-colonial theory, then, will help us to grapple with the stakes and political interests at play in the construction of Italy as both culturally central and politically marginal – a construction essential to the rise of cultural power as practice and ideology. Continental colonization is one important part of the story. Despite Italy's disempowerment among European nations it was, nevertheless, itself an independent and autonomous nation-state from 1861 onwards. To understand the symbolic and material significance of antiquities in the nationhood context, then, we need also to be in conversation with the literature on culture, nationalism, and identity.

When historians and sociologists write about culture and nation-states, they tend to focus on the capacity of institutions and practices to coalesce group identities. Hobsbawm (1983) argued that the appropriation and re-presentation of old materials, ideas, and conventions for new rituals – "invented traditions" – are essential aspects of legitimizing a nation-state, thereby

convincing the citizenry that the nation is natural and inevitable. Inventing traditions, Hobsbawm writes, is “essentially a process of formalization and ritualization, characterized by reference to the past, if only by imposing repetition” (1983: 4). Longevity itself, according to Hobsbawm, is one of the prime bases of national legitimacy. His project aimed at critically unpacking the “actual process” by which a culture *of* nationalism is constructed. Because he focused on the uses of cultural practice for (national) group formation, he glossed questions of exclusion, marginalization, and alternative meanings for “national” symbols.

Smith (2008, 2009) disagreed with Hobsbawm on the temporal parameters of nation-state formation. He agreed with Hobsbawm, however, about the central function of cultural symbols and objects (in particular, antiquities) in legitimating modern nation-states’ claims to power. Smith argued that modern nation-states are a direct continuation of cultural institutions and artifacts of the distant past. His project was to trace the “cultural foundations of nations in different periods of history by means of an analysis of their social and symbolic processes and cultural resources” (Smith 2008: 1). Artworks and objects were part of Smith’s “cultural resources” grouping, an approach he later developed with Athena Leoussi to argue that classical artworks provided 19<sup>th</sup> century European nationalists with a biological grounding in a manifest destiny of nationhood and supremacy (Leoussi 2009).

I have two criticisms of this literature. First, Hobsbawm and Smith fail to address why certain objects, texts, and traditions become associated with the national community while others do not. For them, such materials are interchangeable because their main interest is in the fact that states consecrate something – anything – as national symbol. The authors do not explore why different states end up with different national symbols, much less the *implications* of those choices including what alternative possibilities were silenced or erased. When Smith identifies

practices or material traditions that have continued through centuries, he explains that they have always had intrinsic meaning for their claimant ethnic groups. But meaning originates somewhere, and culture's meanings are radically unstable (McClintock 1995). Cultural objects, in particular, are frequent sites of contested meaning and political ideologies (Rose-Greenland 2012). Smith alerts us to the significance of materiality but he does not challenge that significance. Also ignored by Hobsbawm and Smith is the potential for the selection of particular symbols to shape and constrain future state actions. As Agulhon points out in his perceptive study of the emergence and dissemination of the Marianne figure in Revolutionary France, iconic symbols provide a visual vocabulary that is rich with meaning in specific contexts but ultimately delimited by established patterns of social mythology, historical understandings, and collective meanings (Agulhon 1981).

Mosse's work deals more substantially with the broader and future implications of symbols for society. In his study of sexual abnormality and respectability in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Germany, Mosse found that manliness – heteronormative, potent, self-restrained – was basic to the development of national ideology (Mosse 1985). Homosexuals were understood as biologically and socially perverted, standing outside of the national community. This sort of distinction was fundamental to nationhood production: "Nationalism and respectability assigned everyone his place in life, man and woman, normal and abnormal, native and foreigner; any confusion between these categories threatened chaos and loss of control" (Mosse 1985: 16). Categories of exclusion that pre-dated the nation-state carried over and were re-packaged under nationhood to establish the conditions for inclusion in the new national community.

The culture of nationalism literature, then, tends to sell short cultural objects' meaning and ignore the problem of differentiated power in selecting and consecrating symbols. An

important exception to this tendency is found in the new sociology of materiality literature, which alerts us to the “affordances” of images for social action and political messages (Wagner-Pacifici 2005; Zubrzycki 2013). The concept of affordances speaks to images’ capacity for communicating meaning, but this concept should not be confused with a mutability that is open, infinite, and democratic. Artifacts’ distant historical origins have attracted scholarly interpretations of them as “malleable,” suggesting such pieces do not have a fixed meaning and so are open to viewers’ manipulations.<sup>10</sup> Malleability, a word derived from the Latin *malleus* or hammer, is a useful concept for capturing the phenomenon whereby antiquities’ symbolic value – and sometimes their physical properties, as well – is hammered out through time and across cultural lines. But the hammer is not wielded by everyone. Studying cultural power with the conceptual tools of affordances and strategic malleability, we open an analytical line into how material culture provides “concrete substitutes for abstract discourse” and serves as an agent of socialization into the nation-state (Zubrzycki 2011: 24).

My second critique of the culture of nationalism literature centers on its weak specification of agency and authority and its inattention to the roles played by experts outside of formal state office. Experts and state officials clearly play a role in shaping and sustaining national material culture, but experts are not always *state* experts, and state officials do not always have a coherent plan. Berezin (1994, 1997) illustrates the latter point with her study of public theater in Fascist Italy. Mussolini, she argues, lacked a coherent philosophy of “Fascist culture,” and for that matter so did his officers. The Fascist nation took form through aesthetics

---

<sup>10</sup> This line of argument is especially prominent in the literature on archaeology and nationalism, where the debate is staked on the vulnerability of materiality to predacious politicians’ deliberate misappropriations of history and culture. The core problem here is that archaeology and nationalism scholars want it both ways: that antiquities (and other objects of historical culture) have an inherent symbolic content that is recognizable as significant; *and* that they are empty vessels cut off from their original socio-historical use-content and therefore available to be filled with contemporary political ideology. See, for example, papers in the volumes edited by Kohl and Fawcett (1995); Galaty & Watkinson (2004).

and cultural practices that were unmistakably Fascist in their contours. But as far as content, there was no single, consistent message at heart. By examining the low-level, frontline actors and producers involved with public theater, Berezin specifies and unpacks locations of authority, going beyond vague references to “state institutions” and showing that state sponsorship is no guarantee of ideological consistency.

To be the world’s greatest cultural power requires that ideology, rhetoric, and bureaucracy be aligned to promote the idea and appearance of quantitative and qualitative superiority in the domain of culture. State officials cannot do that work alone. Experts perform this work when they naturalize objects as “national” (or superlative) through their work routines. Scientists, particularly archaeologists, enjoy special credibility as interpreters of artifacts because their systems of classification and quantification appear objective and a-national. Numbers, in the form of statistical claims about the world or categories of production and resources, make the discourse of cultural superiority seem substantiated and irrefutable. The literature on science and technology studies (STS) demonstrates that statistics influence not only the way that we think about the world but also our capacity for thinking about it (Bowker & Star 1999; Porter 1995). In her study of the rise of statistical knowledge in 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy, sociologist Silvana Patriarca argues that statistics not only performed the work of “ideological and political legitimation in Italy” but also “contributed to the creation, the ‘production’ as it were, of the Italian nation, that is of the very entity that they were supposed to describe” (Patriarca 1996: 4). Thus when ex-Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi claimed at a 2008 London press conference that Italy possesses “72% of the world’s cultural patrimony,” he was participating in a powerful and now-widespread form of discourse that attempts to quantify culture as a global resource and carve out a numerical

share of it for Italy.<sup>11</sup> But quantification is a means to an end rather than an end in itself. The end goal of any process of quantification is to make claims appear objective and real, masking the subjective decisions, judgment calls, and biases that are baked into the process (Hirschman, Berry & Rose-Greenland 2013). In the specific realm of cultural materiality in Italy, quantification attests to and asserts national coherence through and for antiquities.

### **Cultural power and varieties of historical narrative**

To describe one's nation-state as the world's greatest cultural power is to make a profound ideological and organizational commitment. What makes a state a cultural power is whether the state is able to wield control over culture. Such control is effectuated through a variety of mechanisms, including traditional means of enforcement – police tactics, laws and court proceedings, media broadcasts, and state-sponsored spectacles – as well as mechanisms not normally associated with state control, such as scientific activities, museum shows, and multi-media entertainment. These mechanisms both include people in the project of nationhood and exclude Others from it. How best to make sense of cultural power as a factor in the nation—state equation?

The work on cultural diplomacy offers one approach to this question. Political scientists, for example, suggest that culture is a resource that can be deployed to extract a favorable outcome in relations with another state. This position extends Joseph Nye's classic distinction between hard and soft power. For Nye, industrial power and military power are classic examples of "hard power" – the carrots and sticks used by one state (or a coalition of states) to change the behavior of another state (Nye 2005). "Soft power" refers to art, film, books, music, religion,

---

<sup>11</sup> Berlusconi, speaking at a London press conference. September 10, 2008. The exact quotation was: "Il 72% del patrimonio culturale in Europa si trova in Italia e ben il 50% di quello mondiale sta nel nostro Paese."

cuisine, ideas, and values, and, in Nye's theory, is deployed to foster diplomatic relations and win over foreign peoples without threat of violence or economic sanction. This position grew from studies of Cold War-era uses of culture, by the CIA, KGB, and various front organizations, to penetrate the Iron Curtain and exert influence through apparently harmless endeavors including concerts, dance recitals, book prizes, and literary magazines. In this historical setting, secrecy was intensely important. Overt state involvement was widely perceived to interfere with the autonomy of artistic production and infringe on the workings of the market as arbiter of taste and artistic evaluation (Hixson 1997; Stonor Saunders 1999; Winks 1987). While the cultural productions themselves were assiduously promoted, the state investments behind them were blacked out. Culture, seen through this frame, is power by propaganda.<sup>12</sup> Nye's conceptualization, however, is fundamentally flawed for assuming that states use culture, as "soft power," to achieve the same outcome that weapons and sanctions achieve more rapidly (and with higher casualties) (Bilgin & Elis 2008; Mann 1986).

Culture, far from being a second-rate or emasculated soft power, is a potent vehicle for shaping social action where weapons and sanctions are neither realistic options nor believable threats. Ciampi's assertion that Italy is the world's greatest cultural power was not a claim about Italy having lots of one form of power ("cultural") over and above other possible forms (economic, military, agricultural, technological, and so forth). Ciampi's statement is a description of Italy as a *type* of state – a state that draws its strength *from* and wields that strength *over* culture. This entails the state's use of several means of power – law, police, military, science, and money – to preside over the cultural sphere. In Italy's case, that control is especially evident in the state's efforts to control the circulation and use of antiquities and ruins. Scientific

---

<sup>12</sup> For a sociological study of this historical process, adopting a more nuanced analytical position: Guilbaut 1983.

and organizational expertises are key to this process, primarily in their use of instruments and routines to count and categorize objects into artifacts and then into antiquities or *beni culturali*. This is the work of census and inventory. Its outcome is what I call *indexical history*.

Indexical history is a narrative of the past focused on quantity, categories, and organizational procedures. In the present case, indexical history is grounded in the practice of piling up recovered or repatriated antiquities. The meaning of index is herein two-fold: repatriated antiquities are an index of cultural power in that they attest to the state's effectiveness; and the listing and cataloguing of objects teaches nationals that their cultural patrimony is significant primarily for its size. In the second and third chapters, I will elaborate the idea of indexical history and explain why and to what end, in the modern nation-state, it displaced *iconic history* as Italy's dominant narrative framework of the past. Here, I concentrate on the nexus of expertise and epistemologies – scientific and bureaucratic – that ensures the smooth functioning of cultural power in Italy.

### **Cultural inventory: quantification as bureaucratic power**

In his landmark study of English social engineering in 19<sup>th</sup> century Ireland, sociologist Patrick Carroll explains that the census was a crucial form of “social arithmetic” (Carroll 2006: 92). The census or social survey recorded quantitative and qualitative information, using standard categories that were designed to make organizational sense of the people, agricultural and mineral resources, and towns of Ireland. The census attached statistical meaning to Ireland and thus served as an instrument of social engineering. The key to understanding the power of the Irish census, Carroll argues, is in recognizing that every census is a construct of reality whose categories and questions point to the census-takers' political interests.



Social arithmetic plays a fundamental role in constructing social reality. Statistics, population measures, and categories shape society – and, by turn, our perception of society – through their “power of naming” (Bourdieu 1985). That perception might be national (Anderson 1991: chapter 10) or ethnic in nature (Cohn 1996). Perceptions vary because once the census-takers fill their questionnaires and the census-makers compile their reports, they disseminate their findings and thus cede interpretational authority to a broader audience. For this reason, government authorities work hard to impose official meaning on the lists and numbers by attaching to them narratives, graphs, and moral frames – thereby dealing in a specific form of social arithmetic best thought of as “political arithmetic” (Patriarca 1996: 13-14).

The social phenomenon of the census is well-trod scholarly terrain. The inventory is less theorized. The conceptual frames that obtain around censuses are useful for opening our inquiry into objects’ organization and rule but those frames do not fit perfectly around the phenomenon of the inventory. The differences extend beyond semantics, although etymological divergences are illuminating. In ancient Rome, “censere” meant to register citizens and their property and then calculate an appropriate tax amount. *Censere* meant “to assess” or “estimate,” and it was this mandatory procedure that took Joseph and Mary from Nazareth to Bethlehem in 1 BC.

“Inventory,” on the other hand, extends from *invenire*. In Latin *invenire* means “to discover,” “to contrive” or “to force into being.” The fact that the English words “invention” and “inventory” both extend from *invenire* points to an important ontological difference between a census and an inventory. Whereas a census is (in theory, if not in practice), the ordering of an existing amalgam, an inventory creates an amalgam by listing it out. Lists create a social reality that is manifestly bureaucratic. List-makers control the categories, which can be collapsed or further divided to fit the growing contents of the lists (Chastel 1996; Kowalski 2007). The

physical list itself – on paper or computer screen – inscribes the goods into bureaucratic reality and thereby claims the inventory as property of the bureaucratic officials or list-makers (Mitchell 2002). It also concentrates attention on mass or bulk rather than on individual characteristics of any particular object. This aspect of inventorying goes hand in hand with indexical history, whereby history is experienced as lists of things that are, by virtue of being inscribed in the list, under the control of the state.

In Italy, cultural power is intensified the longer and more specific are the government's cultural inventories. A robust inventory is proof for Ciampi's "cultural powerhouse" claim as well as Berlusconi's 72% remark. Robustness is one important feature of effective inventorying. Expertise is another. In Italy the inventorying of cultural goods is the legally protected prerogative of state actors. The Carabinieri maintains a list of lost or stolen artworks and artifacts, known as the Leonardo Data Bank. Italian citizens are compelled by law to file a *denuncia*, a police report, whenever they discover an artifact, inherit an artwork, or are victimized by art theft (on the social problems and moral quandaries set up by the legal requirement of the *denuncia*: Herzfeld 2009). Information from art-related *denuncia* filings is sent to the Art Squad, and hence to the Leonardo Data Bank. In short, citizens who deal with artifacts and artworks are more often than not legally obliged to contribute to the government's inventory without any influence over how the inventory should be used and whether it is a worthy use of public resources at all.

### **Ruling Culture: Material and methodological orientations**

Being a cultural power involves both sides of the coin: the state aims to exert power (of all kinds) over the cultural sphere, and, as a result of controlling that sphere, can then utilize culture to exert further power over its citizens and other nation-states. The second half of this definition has

been subject to extensive scholarly investigation (Blanning 2002; Jones 2013; Kohl & Fawcett 1995). The first half, however, as well as the combination of the two into one synergistic whole, is largely unexplored: sociologists have hitherto paid little attention to the means and logic via which states become cultural powers. Why do states care so much about controlling cultural objects? What does it mean for a state to be a cultural power, and how is that status achieved? How can a state both seek to control culture, and at the same time use culture as a means of control? Finally, just how unique is Italy? Is it really the world's greatest cultural power?

To answer these questions, I conducted archival and ethnographic research in Italy from 2010 through 2013. I visited archaeology sites and museums, conservation labs and illicit dig sites, private homes and public parks, and the Art Squad headquarters in Rome. My study is based on first-hand conversations with Art Squad staff, state sector archaeologists, university archaeologists, museum curators, illicit excavators and collectors of art, and ordinary citizens whose lives are permeated with the sites, sounds, and political dramas of Italy's cultural treasures.<sup>13</sup> My argument draws from the stories and viewpoints of these individuals, as well as from court cases and archival material reaching back in time to the early years of unification and extending through the first fights to nationalize all Italian antiquities – the opening volley in an assault on colonial powers' presumptive appropriation of cultural objects from “lesser” powers. I present more specific information about my methods, including data coding choices and archival sampling strategies, in Appendix A.

My material focus is objects associated with ancient Rome and Etruria. The objects in this broad category are called *artifacts* and/or *antiquities*, sometimes interchangeably. The two

---

<sup>13</sup> In order to protect their privacy, subjects' names have been changed throughout the dissertation. Unless otherwise indicated, I use pseudonyms exclusively. I conducted the qualitative research for this project with approval from the University of Michigan's Institutional Review Board (study number HUM00064574).

terms are not identical, however. All antiquities are artifacts, but not all artifacts become antiquities. Artifacts are objects fashioned from durable materials by humans, including but not limited to tools, clothes, pots, and artworks. In archaeological contexts, an artifact is conventionally associated with a past people and may be found through excavation of a burial, hoard, structure, or roadside (among other contexts). Artifacts are objects artificially fashioned for use by and for humans, and are thus distinguished from *ecofacts*, which are byproducts of natural materials used by humans (examples of which include animal bones, seeds, oyster shells, and other food waste).

Antiquities are a socially constructed subset of artifacts. Artifacts, too, constitute a socially constructed category. Field archaeologists constantly, often unconsciously, use classification schema to determine what to keep, what to throw away, and how to sort the kept finds. Such classificatory work is shaped by social dynamics and historically situated subjectivities (Edgeworth 2003; Rose-Greenland 2013). Antiquities are fetishized artifacts (Abu El-Haj 2001: 79). They are imbued with additional social significance as symbols of civilizational achievements, historic destiny, and ethnic identity. Italian law compresses and crystallizes this complex of social values with its definition of legally protected antiquities. As I will demonstrate, state authorities' interpretation of the legal definition ("immovable and moveable objects that have historical, archaeological, paleontological, or artistic interest") has widened through the years. Law enforcement mechanisms apply not just to the "capolavori" (masterpieces) discussed by the framers of the original law, but also to objects considered "carabattole" (in English, "odds and ends") as described to me by an Art Squad official. Conceptually, this means that the lifeblood of national culture courses through the smallest fragments of material antiquity. Practically, it means that the Art Squad's field agents have in

their crosshairs high-powered private collectors as well as low-level diggers with broken amphorae in their car trunk. In sum, the definitional and operational parameters of the material objects matter because they reciprocally shape social action.

By “associated with”, I include objects produced within Roman and Etruscan territories, but also objects that show up in Roman and Etruscan sites. The latter such objects may have been traded, purchased, or looted in antiquity, or somehow arrived in Italy in later years. The complexity of objects’ movement through time brings up the issue of *provenance* or archaeological find spot, a key point of concern for state officials and archaeologists alike but, as I will explain in Chapter Three, for somewhat different reasons. Italian law seeks to cut through this complexity by providing a clear definition of provenance to State officials who need to prove where the object originated or is likely to have originated. Archaeologists care about provenance because information about objects’ materials, form, and patterns of circulations sustain historical theorizing about past cultural groups and practices.

Antiquities offer important insights into what cultural power is and how it works. Previous studies have treated antiquities as an economic resource and framed them as interchangeable with other types of resources that have monetary value and are subject to contestation. By contrast, I treat antiquities not as generic resource or as outcomes of political conflict but as agentic objects whose specific material and aesthetic qualities trigger social action. In this vein I ally intellectually with scholars active in the “new sociology of art,” who argue that artworks have capacity to “affect people and to create new social bonds, practices and meanings,” calling on scholars to “shift our attention from the contextual factors of art to the artworks themselves” (Domínguez Rubio 2013: 5; for other key contributions to the new sociology of art: Benzecry 2011; Zubrzycki 2013).

One object that I will highlight is the Euphronios *krater*, a fifth-century wine-mixing bowl of Greek manufacture that was at the center of a dispute between the Italian state prosecutor and the Metropolitan Museum of Art during the 1990s and 2000s. The *krater* now occupies pride of place in the Villa Giulia in Rome, the country's largest museum of Etruscan antiquities. When it was brought back to Rome it was heralded as a victory for the Italian state. The institutional and political events surrounding the bowl's repatriation are clearly important for my study and will be examined in detail in the third chapter of the dissertation. Also significant, I insist, is the bowl itself. The images on its exterior, its size, colors, and historical provenance combine to provide a window onto the broader theme of why and when people invest affectively in nationhood and cultural power.

The fragments of *bucchero*<sup>14</sup> that I was shown by a tomb robber near Siena, on the other hand, lack the dazzling iconicity of Euphronios's bowl but were proudly held up by their owner as constituting a physical bridge to the "real" Italian past (*un'epoca autentica*). Both sorts of objects – treasures and scraps – are presumed by law to be state property. Both play a role in the construction of a cultural power, yet their undeniable physical differences and status distinctions will help us to reveal deep challenges facing the state in its attempt at total control over ancient materiality.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The theory of power that I offer applies to the nation-state as a whole, yet my ethnographic focus is regional: I conducted my interviews and observations in Lazio, Umbria, and Tuscany, in the heart of the Italian peninsula. These regions share a gold mine of Etruscan and Roman artifacts

---

<sup>14</sup> A dark-glazed pottery type characteristic of Etruria.

spread among them, yet the men and women I spoke with stressed cultural and social divergences that, they said, made their own cultural practices and heritage special. How does this regional tension square with the state's project of controlling a legally enshrined, institutionally reinforced *national* culture? Taken together, these sources of evidence tell a fascinating story of one nation-state's rise to ruling culture.

Every nation-state presents its own rich and complex set of historical and social contingencies, and any number of them could have provided an interesting case study for this project. But no other nation-state has, to my knowledge, been described by its leaders as the world's greatest cultural power or as possessing 72% of the world's cultural treasures (or 50% or 90%, all claims made by Italian officials in recent years). This mode of discourse is not empty rhetoric. It is a pervasive form of social thinking that finds expression through mass media, tourist guidebooks, academic publications, and policy writing. The active and highly visible Art Squad, meanwhile, performs the dual function of making the case that Italy's culture is so desirable and valuable as to warrant special protection, and showing that the state is good at providing that protection. The combination of social thought and intense allocation of state resources to controlling culture makes Italy an important site for developing our understanding of what it means for a state to be a cultural power.

My dissertation weaves together several strands of scholarly work, some of them decades in the making. Much has been written about state formation, and the centrality of resources and (often separately) culture in that process. While I will spend time discussing the meaning of cultural objects to Italian statesmen, intellectuals, and religious officials at the dawn of the Italian nation-state, I am primarily concerned with the role played by mechanisms for controlling culture as the state approached its fifth decade. Another body of work focuses on nations' uses of

historical evidence to construct stories about the national community's rightful place in world history. This vast body includes the Hobsbawmian view of national "traditions" as ideological fabrication, but extends too into archaeology and anthropology, whose practitioners have adroitly linked nationalism with archaeology, human remains, and contemporary politics. While I am very interested in how state officials and scientific experts dig deep into the soil to provide a logic to Italy's past-present, I also pay attention to the phenomenon whereby the stock of artifacts and antiquities considered to be Italian actually expands to contain artifacts from foreign sites of manufacture. A true cultural power does not confine its control to domestic wares. This is especially the case in Italy, where the historical point of pride has shifted from *Romanitas* with Rome at its center to (ancient) global power with claims on the cultural and political achievements of Latin-speakers in some fourteen modern nation-states.

Shifts in history can be defined and approached in various ways. The questions and case at the heart of my project demand processual historical analysis.<sup>15</sup> Here, I align methodologically with the eventful sociology proposed by William H. Sewell, Jr. (1996). Sewell conceptualizes the historical event with two important formulations: first, a specific construction of social structure in which material evidence is given analytical parity with ideas; and second, situating the event with episodes that produce a significant reordering of social structures. Sewell's grounding of social structures and social transformation in materials makes his methodological framework particularly useful for the present analysis of cultural power, nationalism, and antiquities. As with other sociologists who centralize cultural practices in their studies of state formation (Adams 2005; Gorski 2003), I follow Sewell by studying the uses of meaning.

---

<sup>15</sup> I use the term "processual" in the sociological sense, though I acknowledge its resonance (and controversy) in the archaeological literature, where its meaning is different. See Trigger 2006 for critical discussion of the archaeological meaning.



My historical methodology is not purely Sewellian, however. I extend Sewell, Julia Adams, and Phil Gorski by examining materiality and selectivity. I am interested not just in the malleability of materials, but also in the sites and historical moments in which materials are selected for shaping. Some materials and events are objects of contested meaning. Why are others of them left out? Experts and state officials have the upper hand here. By determining which objects are artifacts and which artifacts treasures, they determine the parameters of cultural legitimacy and thereby *confer* legitimacy (Bourdieu 1991; Mitchell 2002).

In addition to state formation and nationalism, several core sociological concerns recur throughout my study. Social order, deviance, marginality, and identity: each of these terms sustains a profound literature in sociology (as well as anthropology, philosophy, political science, and, especially in the case of identity, archaeology). There is good reason for this sustained and widespread interest. Order and deviance are central processes in social life, enabling groups to keep going with a sufficient level of rhythmic predictability. As I discuss in Chapter Five, however, the usual descriptors of unauthorized excavation – as “deviant” or “socially marginal” or “criminal” act – turn out to be insufficiently nuanced to capture the contingencies of the local communities in which unauthorized excavation takes place. This is why close, ethnographic observation must work together with archival data to sustain a socio-historical theory of cultural power.

### **Mapping the Field: Ideologies and Discourses**

Studying cultural power involves a complex social logic that cannot be understood through a single analytical vantage point. Multiple voices have bearing on this issue, and the opinions and values of those voices differ for reasons that cannot be ascribed to a single ideology, whether nationalism, scientism, or governmentality. This is why we need to study archaeologists, tomb

robbers, and state actors. The voices of women and men who do not inhabit any of those categories clearly are also important, and while I do not offer a comprehensive study of normatively obeisant citizens' understanding of cultural power and nationalized antiquities, I do bring in so-called ordinary citizens at various points. Of course, employees of state offices and of the Art Squad, archaeologists, and tomb robbers are citizens, too. Without reifying these group headings or essentializing specific subjects, prevailing ideologies can be associated with each.

### The Ideology and Practice of Archaeologists

The intellectual core of professional archaeology is concern for the preservation of sites and objects of historical, socio-cultural concern (Gerstenblith 2008: 598; Trigger 2006). This concern for preservation extends to the sub-soil. Stratigraphic data, or the information that arises from careful, systematic recording and removal of layers of dirt, sustains archaeologists' arguments about past cultural developments. In practical terms, this professional concern is made possible through archaeologists' monopoly on excavation, study, and publication according to the protocols and conventions of the discipline. In Italy, as in many nation-states around the world, archaeologists rely on the state to protect that monopoly. State officials issue excavation permits to archaeologists, (ostensibly) control access to archaeology sites, inspect excavation sites for safety and evidence of correct excavation procedures, and provide specialized expertise and equipment for deeper analysis of unusual finds. Professional archaeological bodies including the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) and the European Archaeological Association (EAA) officially oppose unauthorized, casual excavation as well as the circulation of artifacts through markets – black and white. Many professional archaeologists refuse to publish artifacts that lack provenance, which means that they were unearthed without evidence of official sanction and probably (therefore) without proper recording of stratigraphy.

The ideological core of archaeology must be situated within the profession's historical entanglements with nation-state building and nationalist sentiments (Abu El-Haj 2001; Kohl & Fawcett 1995; Zerubavel 1995). Archaeologists seem to have every reason to work closely and cooperatively with state officials. The ideology and discourse of professional archaeology align with the state's policies and practices for protecting artifacts and archaeological sites. This is no coincidence, since Italian lawmakers have claimed since the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to be acting in the interest of scientific study and conservation of artifacts. The view from the ground, however, reveals disjuncture and divergence in praxis that point to more fundamental ideological differences. At the three excavation sites I studied, archaeologists demonstrated frustration and playful disregard for state actors. The process of obtaining a dig permit is widely seen as shot through with petty politics and personal biases on the part of archaeological superintendents. The patronage system that obtains in professional archaeology sometimes makes foreign archaeologists or Italian archaeologists who work and reside outside of Italy perceive themselves to be at a structural disadvantage in securing excavation permits. And as for legally enshrined workplace safety rules that are meant to protect excavators, only one of the three sites that I studied actually implemented them. Studying the ideology and praxis of field archaeology, then, helps us to see beyond the formal schematics of cultural power.

#### Discourse and Practices of Unauthorized excavators and Collectors

Unauthorized excavators and collectors comprise a variegated group that includes wealthy professionals as well as agricultural workers who engage in clandestine excavating in their spare time. Despite considerable social differences among them, they share a broad ideology that holds that artifacts should not be limited in their circulation to scientific channels or state bureaucracy. While they agreed that Italian antiquities have universal significance and should not be claimed

solely by archaeologists and state officials, they tended to insist that antiquities belong at home. “Home” is *patria*, the nation-state, and it is determined by the soil in which the object is found. This is a literal application of the principle of *jus soli*: in this way, a Greek-made *amphora* is an Italian cultural treasure if it is excavated in Italy.

Unauthorized excavators mobilize two key discourses. The first is populist: antiquities belong to the people and so the people should have a say in how such objects are interpreted, evaluated, and displayed. The current system of museums and government archaeological services does not satisfy most unauthorized excavators’ populist inklings. Selling objects for monetary gain is abhorred by populist unauthorized diggers. For them, keeping objects for private study or admiration, or giving them as gifts to friends and loved ones, are the markers of proper populist engagement with antiquities.

The second discourse is preservationist: unauthorized excavators believe themselves to be performing an invaluable service by unearthing long-hidden objects and taking care of them *outside of the museum system*. Precisely because museums are seen as wholly devoid of transparency in decision-making and display priorities, unauthorized excavators perceive their activities to be protecting antiquities’ authentic meanings. This is the tension between iconic and indexical histories, which I will develop in the second and third chapters. Unauthorized excavators see the state’s long inventory of cultural objects, through catalogues and press conferences, and cannot discern individual objects’ meaning past that of indexical plug-in. The populist and preservationist discourses weave together to sustain a logic of unauthorized excavating.

## Mapping the chapters

My analytical strategy is to trace the flows and formation of formal power through the organs of government through the related professions and finally into the circuits of circulation that see non-state actors making national culture. This strategy allows me to use the development of cultural power as a lens through which to study social change in Italy more broadly. The path leading to and following from nationalized material culture travels right through the heart of the project of nationhood. In putting antiquities at the heart of state power we open a window onto a wider set of issues including anxieties about modern masculinity, deviance and crime, and Italy's declining prestige as a world power (a Mussolinian fixation that persists to this day).

In the second chapter I examine the historical antecedents to nationalizing cultural objects. The nationalization of antiquities was achieved some fifty years after political unification, when the project of *social* unification was still incomplete. Centralizing authority and ownership of cultural materiality was a key step towards social unification or, more specifically, constructing the national community. As I will explain in this chapter, the standard scholarly assessments of this development do not adequately address the reasons for and consequences of strident opposition to nationalizing culture. Nationalists, anti-nationalists, Communists, Catholics, businessmen, scholars, and courtiers brought their myriad grievances to the table. The great public debate over *la difesa dell'arte* (the defense of art), which began in earnest in the early 1880s and attenuated somewhat after 1909, was a crucial moment in which Italians worked through thorny questions about post-unification organization of society. Statesmen and public figures used cultural objects as a vehicle to hash out impassioned ideas about the economy, the religion, the rights of common people, and the place of Italy among European nations.

One question that I tackle in the second chapter is why antiquities rose to administrative prominence. Early proponents of art protection policy compiled lists of “treasures” (*beni*) that they wished to see protected. Members of the Camera dei Deputati acted on the interests of their local constituencies and thus prioritized statues, church murals, and paintings from their hometowns. When they convened in Rome they could not agree on what constituted *national* cultural material. Camera members Giovanni Rosadi and Luigi Rava helped launch a publicity campaign in which they articulated the centrality of ancient Rome to all Italians. At the same time, they skillfully lobbied their colleagues to accept ancient Rome as a material compromise. Today the significance of classical antiquities is asserted through various outlets, including state press conferences and museum guidebooks, which present them as the keys to understanding western civilization and the nation of Italy. The surprising finding in Chapter Two, then, is that protecting ancient Roman materiality was not a priority for every statesman. Its consecration had to be worked at – re-articulated to include a wide set of cultural interests and anxieties.

The challenge for Italians – scholars, statesmen, and ordinary citizens – has been to justify contemporary Italians’ rightful ownership of ancient objects. The Romantic view of Italian culture has traditionally worked *against* such claims because while mythologizing artworks, monuments, and the landscape, the Romantic view also locates moral degeneracy, savagery, and low intelligence in modern Italians (Patriarca 2010). In this light it is impossible for modern Italians to be the rightful heirs to the ancient ruins and artifacts that surround them. The cultural patrimony is thus rendered universal and the removal of artworks and monuments from Italy by French, British, and German collectors is made natural and civilized.

This paradox – patrimony without ownership – was already acknowledged and wrestled with by Italian intellectuals in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, prior to the *Risorgimento* period. As I will

explain in Chapter Two, the decades leading up to the 1909 nationalization law were fraught with disagreements among politicians and cultural preservationists over *whether* – never mind *how* – to keep Italian treasures in Italy and make them accessible to the public. There was no agreement on what right, if any, poor, rural, and illiterate Italians had to “their” cultural patrimony. Wealthy and powerful collectors such as Augusto Castellani gave away Etruscan and Roman artworks and artifacts to foreign friends and courtiers, arguing that the objects would be better appreciated outside of Italy than in it (Moretti Sgubini 2000).

The third, fourth, and fifth chapters examine the three main categories of actors in the struggle for meaning and ownership of national cultural goods. They are the Art Squad (known properly as the Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale or TPC); public-sector archaeologists and museums; and unauthorized excavators or *tombaroli* (tomb robbers). We can think of these actors as, respectively, state, science, and scoundrels. Chapter Three looks at the Art Squad and its formation, function, organization, and symbolic power. Focusing mainly on repatriation, I sketch an approach to cultural power by studying the ideology of *patria*. I show that family sentiments and the structured methods of belonging to more than one cultural group gave rise to a social ontology that informs and sustains the repatriation of cultural objects from foreign hands to Italy. The irony of repatriation is that it does not further *patria* because its emphasis on quantities and measurable “wins” diminishes the qualitative meaning of the objects. The real cultural work of repatriation is repatriation itself.

Chapter Four focuses on public sector archaeologists, by which I mean field archaeologists who excavate at state-sponsored digs; museum-based archaeologists who serve as docents, conservators, and directors; and employees of the archaeological superintendence or Soprintendenza. Their formal role is straightforward: they provide scientific expertise to

complement the work of Art Squad agents and ensure that recovered cultural goods and properly studied, published, and displayed. In reality, however, there is no single role for state archaeologists and they reject the suggestion that they are appendages of the Art Squad. Some public-sector archaeologists do work closely with Art Squad agents and support the squad's tactics and cultural ideology. A much larger share of public sector archaeologists works far from Rome and the centralized governing apparatus. They work in local museums or dig sites where local identities are not easily subordinated to the national cultural narrative. Within this rich milieu of practice, identity, and materiality, I examine the extent to which archaeology functions as a science and archaeologists consider themselves members of an objective, international field.

The project is unstable in part because of disagreements among state actors. Public sector archaeologists do not always see eye to eye with the state's art squad agents. They disagree, for example, on the issue of repatriating stolen artworks (or artworks with questionable provenance) to Italy from foreign collections. While the Italian government argues on legal grounds that particular objects are the rightful property of the Italian people, many archaeologists question whether the state's unstinting pursuit of "unprovenanced" cultural goods is morally defensible. The tension arises from the fact that museums throughout the country face the twin pressures of budget cuts and limited display resources, making it very difficult for them to conserve, study, and display recovered objects. Indeed, many thousands of artworks and artefacts languish in storage boxes – a situation decried in one national newspaper as the shameful "basementing" (*scantinati*) of "our patrimony."<sup>16</sup>

Unauthorized excavators and collectors of antiquities are my focus in Chapter Five. Here, I explain the emergence of the tomb robber as a despised social actor in 20<sup>th</sup> century Italy. After

---

<sup>16</sup> "Il nostro patrimonio «di riserva» ci permette di respirare," by Cristina Acidini. *Corriere della Sera* 8/4/2012.



looking at definitions of the *tombarolo* in authoritative linguistic studies, I ask how *tombaroli* are portrayed in the public imagination and what role they perform in the master cultural narrative. I rely on original qualitative data from interviews and observations, plus analysis of legal cases in which unauthorized excavators were prosecuted. Why, I ask, do Italians excavate illicitly or sell cultural goods in explicit violation of the law? The answers are complicated. There is no single motive – whether profit or thrill-seeking – that links all unauthorized excavators. Nor is the concept of resistance sufficient to explain their activities. They see themselves as patriots and connoisseurs, nationalists and local heroes, real men and moral victors. This is the paradox of “cultural intimacy,” as Herzfeld (2005) termed it: citizens flout the rules and ignore the law but turn out to be staunchly loyal to the nation-state. Ethnographic work with unauthorized excavators allowed me to peer into a particular aspect of cultural intimacy in contemporary Italy, in turn suggesting new ways of thinking about material culture and its function in social memory; about marginalized cultural practices and people’s personal struggles to understand and reconcile themselves to those practices; and about the use of state power to shape collective thinking about heritage, nationhood, and what it means to be Italian.

## CHAPTER 2

### Historical antecedents and the path to nationalized culture in Italy

[These] monuments of the past, magnificent yet incomprehensible because not built by us and yet standing around like lovely mute ghosts; all those rulers who landed by main force from every direction, who were at once obeyed, soon detested, and always misunderstood, their only expressions works of art we couldn't understand and taxes which we understood only too well and which they spend elsewhere: all these things have formed our character, which is thus conditioned by events outside our control as well as by a terrifying insularity of mind. – Don Fabrizio, speaking to Chevalley about Sicily<sup>17</sup>

A Hellenistic marble statue, made 2,300 years ago in what is now Turkey, is returned to Italy, from whose soil it was taken for the international market. Italian officials applaud, the disgraced foreign museum renews its commitment to protecting cultural heritage, and the statue is given a new home in one of Italy's museums. What more is there to say? The scenario thus described has become so familiar that we hardly pause to question its core assumptions. Heritage is a thing – a discrete and bounded body of objects, buildings, and sites. Protection is important because heritage – those “lovely, mute ghosts” in the words of Lampedusa's protagonist – is under threat. Since the focus of international debate is protection and how it should operate, the object of that operation is naturalized. Few bother to ask where heritage came from much less whether it exists.

---

<sup>17</sup> Giuseppe di Lampedusa. 1958. *Il Gattopardo*. Edizioni Feltrinelli. (Trans. A. Colquhoun 2007, *The Leopard*. New York: Random House. Pages 179-180.)

Heritage had to be socially constructed (de Jong & Rowlands 2007; Lemonnier 2012; Nas *et al.* 2002; see also Feeley-Harnik 1996 on historicism and presentism). Protecting old things is not an obvious thing to do, after all, unless those old things are deemed symbolically and materially valuable (Appadurai 1986; Gosden 2005; Lowenthal 1985). One conundrum that arises from this is that value cannot be attached to old things without an overriding purpose for their protection. There is, moreover, a dialectical relationship between social *memory* and cultural *heritage* as ways of knowing the past. Social memory resides in everyday, local-level practices, whereas heritage is a branch of state management anchored by scientific expertise and legal documents. This relationship pervades my discussion of developments in ideas about cultural guardianship and property (Chapter Four) and the problematic of unauthorized excavators and collectors, whose artifact-oriented contributions to social memory are negated as heritage crimes and cultural treason (Chapter Five). In this chapter I examine the construction of heritage protection through the lens of national laws and historical developments in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### **Identifying the Main Analytical Lines: Heritage and Memory, Protection and Loss**

National culture in Italy, I argued in Chapter One, comprises a legally enshrined body of nationalized objects (artworks, monuments, and artifacts). Modern cultural power invokes this legal framework to justify its arrangements of state authority and policing. To create a complete picture of cultural power, however, we need to consider the development of heritage protection from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century onwards. The history of nationalized antiquities will be better understood by first explaining the contemporary situation, which frames nationalized cultural objects as pieces of collective heritage.

The 1954 Hague Convention, the basis of international regulations and practices concerning cultural heritage protections, presents national culture as a natural fact of the world. Just as the world is naturally divided into nation-states, so every nation-state, according to the Convention, has its own body of bounded, tangible culture that differs from other nation-states'. Moreover, the language of the Convention emphasizes the importance of cultural diversity among nations in order to ensure the mental and physical health of people (and, by extension, of the national body) (Hylland Eriksen 2001). Convention participants, in keeping with views shared widely in the decade after World War Two, believed that humanity shares a common cultural framework but that every person is socially and biologically grounded in a unique and local culture (Droit 2005). Local-level cultural homes were thought to require protection from cultural homogenization, a byproduct of modernization, and from totalitarian obliteration. Classifying historic cultural materials as "heritage" turned them into a policy object and linked them with scientific procedures and epistemologies (Ingold 1996).

The text of the Hague Convention begins by defining the cultural property of nations:

Article 1 (a): moveable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people, such as monuments of architecture, art or history, whether religious or secular; archaeological sites; groups of buildings which, as a whole, are of historical or artistic interest; works of art; manuscripts, books and other objects of artistic, historical or archaeological interest; as well as scientific collections and important collections of books or archives or of reproductions of the property defined above.

Lowenthal (1985) sheds light on the significance of this text. Pointing to the emphasis on categories of "interest," he argues that the involvement of scientific and management expertise is central to the operationalization of cultural heritage (cf. Meskell 2013). The rise of science in shaping cultural meanings and experiences, he asserts, must be understood in conjunction with

the decline of religious authority over those meanings and experiences. Further, Lowenthal writes, the construction of heritage has always been rooted in narratives of productive social development and rational behavior.<sup>18</sup> This narrative is reinforced by museums, which serve as “key emblems of modernity” and counteract cultural shifts and social uncertainty by framing historical materiality as enduring and classical (Rowlands & de Jong 2007: 17; see also Chapter Four of this dissertation). But museums do not eliminate historical disjuncture entirely. The sense of loss and disruption is essential to heritage because it directs people’s attentions to the historical fragments on which the modern nation-state is built. The pre-modern past must be fragmentary and partially lost, otherwise there is no mission for the modern nation. At the same time, however, the past cannot be forgotten entirely because without a history the nation loses its legitimacy (Anderson 1991; Herzfeld 2005; Nora 1989).

I will return to the example of the Hague Convention later in this chapter, when I discuss post-World War Two cultural shifts in Italy. For now, I offer a caveat. Beneath the smooth waters of a carefully managed heritage lies a messy struggle to define specific boundaries (Herzfeld 2009). This is evident in on-going fights in the Middle East, for example, over which national people has the stronger claim to key sites in Jerusalem – an ancient city with a patchwork history of cultures and ethnicities that does not square with contemporary nation-state divisions or with the heritage distinctions that arise from nation-state divisions (Abu El-Haj 2001; Silberman 1990). At least two boundary issues are at play in such disputes. One is spatial and deals with the *what* and *where* of what to include in the patrimony set. Another is temporal and deals with the *when* of what to include.

---

<sup>18</sup> See also Askew 2010 and Joy 2012 (chapter 3) on the role of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in articulating a narrative in which cultural protection is rational and enlightened.

Turkey offers an important comparison case with Italy. In Turkey, objects and spaces from the classical (pre-Muslim) era are problematic (Gur 2007, 2010). They are excluded from the patrimony of contemporary Turks but are used as evidence of ancientness, dutifully admired but ultimately foreign to today's Turkish citizens (Göçek & Rose-Greenland 2012). For this reason the Alexander Sarcophagus, widely regarded as a masterpiece of classical Greek carving, is displayed in Istanbul's Archaeological Museum as a star example of pre-Ottoman art. It is not, however, narrativized in such a way that it links directly with Ottoman art. It inhabits a distinct, pre-Turkish category of cultural production. Similarly, the separating out of classical antiquity from contemporary Turkish cultural identity has a temporal element. The point at which irrelevant culture ends and relevant culture begins differs across nation-states. In Turkey it is the start of the Ottoman Empire in 1299 that figures chiefly in the construction of the modern nation-state's national culture. In Italy, 753 BC marks the founding of Rome and the beginning of the imagined national past. The Etruscans configure into this past as a Philhellenic, literate people who were eventually absorbed by Roman culture. Pre-Etruscan peoples of the Italian peninsula do not have a place in Italy's standard national culture.

### **The Road to Nationalized Antiquities in Italy**

Nationalizing cultural goods is taken for granted today as a logical approach to protecting heritage (Gerstenblith 2008; Hamilakis 2007; Yasaitis 2005). In Italy's case, the road to national cultural treasure was rocky and shot through with class and ideological politics (Troilo 2005).

Since the 1700s, several kingdoms and city-states of Italy passed laws aimed at conserving valuable artworks and buildings, prohibiting the exportation of historic objects and monuments, and preserving private collections (Troilo 2011). What was new, and hotly controversial, was the late 19<sup>th</sup> century idea that the unified Italian state should have ownership

of all objects and monuments of historical interest to the Italian people, in the soil and on it. The comprehensive reach of this idea, geographically, temporally, spatially, and culturally, pushed the limits of conventional thinking about the nation-state's jurisdiction and forced collective rethinking of fundamental questions: property, expertise, national identity, and the enfranchisement of non-elites into elite culture through "patrimony."

The 19<sup>th</sup> century intellectuals, connoisseurs, and statesmen who got involved with public art issues had diverse aims and discourses: the "defense of art," Italian patrimony, "*belle arte*," and *tutela* (guardianship) were related ideas with distinct ideologies of state and culture (Balzani 2003; Settis 2007). Participants across these groups overcame differences in opinion to agree that the national government should play some sort of role in protecting artworks and monuments throughout Italy (Serio 2003). But the specifics of that role were disputed. The acceptable (because neutral) point of discussion was *una politica d'arte* – "a policy of art." The national government had policies for the economy, religion, education, health, and the armed forces, but none for cultural materials. The art policy question was the focus of intense national debate for more than a decade before passage of the first national-level antiquities protection law, in 1909. For a nation-state that prides itself on exceptional cultural power, why was antiquities protection such a flash point and what does the *politica d'arte* battle tell us about the dynamics of culture, identity, and nation in Italy more broadly?

Knitting the disparate kingdoms and city-states of the Italian peninsula into a single nation was a complicated process spanning several decades (some argue that it is still unfinished), involving negotiation of diverse civic styles, cultural practices, dialects, and local identities (Gentile 2003; Patriarca & Riall 2012; Riall 1994). Local identities are still vibrantly present in Italy, captured by the term *campanilismo*. The *campanile* of a town is its clocktower,

and *capanalismo* refers to the phenomenon wherein people are loyal to their hometown and instinctively protective of it against rivals (sometimes murderously so). *Campanilismo* means, literally, being tied innately to the sacred rhythms and chronologies of one's town (Manconi 1998).

Alongside the reality of *campanilismo* and strong local identities, however, there was acknowledgement across the Italian peninsula of a common ancient culture that was expressed in the physical ruins of the Etruscans, the Romans, and the early church (Ceserani 2012; Serio 2003). Scholars, church leaders, and state officials wrote and spoke about the role played by this common cultural heritage in the unification of Italy (Hughes Hallett 2013). There was public discussion, too, of the need for everyday Italians to play an active role in educating and training the national consciousness (Serio 2003; Troilo 2005).

The local and the national; ancient and new; elite and everyday. Each of these binary tensions shaped the process whereby antiquities were nationalized. And yet, we have to look beyond domestic histories and politics to understand why and how sparring Italian intellectuals and statesmen were persuaded to find common ground in art policy.

### **Power over Culture and Culture as Power prior to Nationalization**

Until relatively recently – late 19<sup>th</sup> century in some places, well into the 20<sup>th</sup> century in others – it was possible for a colonial power to appropriate artworks and monuments from a foreign land and set them up as emblems of the colonialists' own collective identity (Anderson 1991; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; McClintock 1995). By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, public officials and scholars from so-called “source countries” (Italy but also Greece, Turkey, and Egypt) pushed back: through laws, petitions, and diplomatic relations they advocated for domestic control over the use, circulation, and interpretation of the artifacts found in their soil (Colla 2008; Hamilakis



2003; Jasanoff 2005). This change involved new conceptions of what antiquities meant, from passively admired objects of local and civic pride to active instruments of national influence and authority. When the *politica d'arte* issue was framed not as a philosophical question of governmentality but as a political problem of American domination, the internal dissonance abated and the path to nationalized antiquities suddenly looked much smoother.

As mentioned above, the passage of Italy's first comprehensive antiquities nationalization law in 1909 was a pivotal event. As enshrined in that law, artistic goods and evocative spaces (built or natural) comprise the Italian people's cultural inheritance, administrative responsibility for which lies chiefly with the central government (Balzani 2003; Barbati et al. 2011). This event was a watershed in the field of cultural patrimony, indeed in the developing relationships between cultural materiality and modern nationhood. Of the empirics that I introduced in Chapter One – the Art Squad, the stigmatization of unauthorized excavators, repatriation, the intellectual liminality of archaeologists – all flow from 1909 and must be understood as shaped by the law and the discussion that surrounded it.

With 1909 our pivotal moment, two further temporal parameters await determination: how far back and how far forward in time we must travel in order to historicize cultural power. Historians, archaeologists, and art historians sustain a robust literature on the symbolic value of antique materiality (Ceserani 2012; Schnapp 1997; Trigger 2006). We know from their work that Renaissance artists and scholars considered Roman and Greek ruins and artworks to be technically superior to contemporary forms (Weiss 1988). Classical Greece and Rome were seen as appropriate historical aspirational points for scholars and clergy, whose text-based studies sought to make sense of the distinct yet related destinies of the Church, kingdoms, and city-states of Italy.

Contemporary studies of the history of archaeology concentrate on the regimes of thinking and the modes of knowledge production that have obtained at various moments in the development of archaeology as a profession (Marchand 1996; Trigger 2006; Vašíček & Malina 1990). These studies illuminate the epistemological and instrumental shifts in uncovering, handling, and interpreting artifacts and ruins. Archaeology has progressively moved towards rational classifications and systematic excavation from its origins in text- and myth-driven, highly personalized digs with non-uniform methods (Stiebing 1994). Unearthed artifacts belonged to the diggers or, when archaeological excavation became more organized (17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries), the actual diggers were day laborers in the pay of a scholar or noble or wealthy collector. With few exceptions, unearthed artifacts were at the disposal of the person paying for the dig work (Ceserani 2012; Schnapp 1997).

Histories of material rediscovery and of the development of professional archaeology provide helpful, general context for my analysis but they do not fully inform the discussion to hand. Because my objective is to trace the rise of cultural power prior to and through the 1909 nationalization law, I concentrate on how cultural objects – in this case, antiquities – have been thought about, used, and circulated in the past. The starting point for this discussion could go right back to antiquity itself: already by the time of the early Roman Empire, people struggled to figure out which monuments and buildings were sufficiently significant to warrant preservation efforts; which could be demolished to make room for apartment blocks and markets; and *why* “significant” structures were significant (Rutledge 2012: 302).

I will begin with the discovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 1748. This decision is in the interest of manageable temporal parameters and in order to distill the currents of thought and practice most salient to modern cultural power. After discussing the unfolding of that discovery

and the influence of its diverse stakeholders on collective treatment of antiquities, I move to the Napoleonic appropriation of Italian artworks in 1806 (Ridley 1992). Napoleon's actions galvanized Italians to win back their art and protect against future appropriations. In his acts of appropriation Napoleon did not discriminate on the basis of city-state, and his ecumenical approach prompted a shift in Italians' perceptions of ancient materiality: individual city-states were powerless to resist a force as strong as Napoleon's; the locally-oriented mentality regarding culture was, in this case, detrimental to the whole; and the nature of the Etruscans' and Romans' spread across (modern) provinces and city-states meant that local cultures really did have a lot in common. Thus it was an act of colonial appropriation that triggered nationalist re-appropriation.

Proponents of centralized government guardianship of cultural objects faced steady opposition early on: from antiquarians and dealers, who had a vested economic interest in a free market system for the exportation and private ownership of antiquities; from diplomats and elites, who used antiquities in a lively and complex international gift exchange; and from political rivals whose professional ambitions militated against institutional unity and cooperation. The law passed in spite of vocal opposition in large part because of policy compromises that reframed antiquities as the people's patrimony and placed them in contraposition to pernicious foreign elements including the encroachment of American consumer interests on Italian material culture.

Until about 1902, there was no unified "antiquities nationalization" movement. As Mario Serio writes, "The Italian Parliament resounded with the experience of ancient laws and the novelty of the modern state. Idealism and historicism offered a unique set of traditional and new tools to construct an experience of culture in which the collective wisdom of past and present [Italians] were combined" (Serio 2003: xii). The challenge for Italy's elected officials, Serio

suggests, was to apply new instruments of nation-state governance to the old and venerable area of artworks, monuments, ruins, and the built landscape. The result was symbolic order, which is both an index and objective of cultural power.

Four long-term developments came together at the right time. Based on my archival research, I identify these developments as follows:

- stronger domestic administrative control over the excavation, study, and publication of ancient objects found at Italian sites (a development traced back to the rediscovery of Pompeii and Herculaneum, and related to the development of archaeology as a profession), propelled by the first archaeological administrative act in 1875;
- increased reliance on numbers and statistics to produce knowledge about “the people,” (*il popolo*), the nation (*la patria*), and the land (*la paese*) – a form of knowledge seen by experts and policymakers as objective and therefore as more reliable than other forms (such as folk stories and oral history);
- shifting notions of public and private property, and of the government’s obligation to take action to protect the financial interests of Italy from foreign exploitation;
- intensified interest in the ideologies and symbolisms that drove the process of nationalization, including the resurgence of the cult of the *memoria patria*, which was a strong theme in the history of the Renaissance and enjoyed new popularity at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

These four developments will intersect at various points in my discussion and eventually cohere in the ideology of nationalized antiquities.

1909 was the greatest legislative achievement of modern cultural power in Italy. Smaller, yet significant, victories preceded it, and difficult work followed. The task for the state since the 1909 law has been to figure out what it means to nationalize antiquities: what an antiquity is (and is not), with what instruments police authorities should enforce antiquities protection laws, and how to engender popular support for such laws. The second part of this chapter grapples with this problem. I look at three aspects of the development of nationalized antiquities in Italy: the formation of the Art Squad; the systematic stigmatization of *tombaroli* (tomb robbers, who belong to the category of actors whom I label “unauthorized excavators”); and international laws and regulations, especially UNESCO cultural heritage policies, that have intersected with and informed developments in Italy.

### **‘Lovely, mute ghosts’: Symbolic violence, cultural stereotypes, and colonized civilization**

The quotation from Lampedusa that opened this chapter offers poetical insight into the push-pull of antiquities for Italians since time immemorial. On the one hand, says Don Fabrizio, ancient monuments – those “lovely, mute ghosts” – constitute the character of Italians by sustaining natural pride in artistic achievement and past civilizations. On the other, those monuments are not really *theirs*; Italians did not make them, do not really understand them, and cannot help but associate them with taxation, conscription, and other forms of domination. Those lovely, mute ghosts represent symbolic violence: in our midst but not really ours, for we are not good enough to claim them.

Don Fabrizio’s lament to Chevally needs to be understood in a broader context of cultural stereotypes about Italians (Burke 1997). Specifically, artistic precociousness has long been seen as a double-edged sword for Italy: the vestiges of antiquity and the catalogue of Renaissance achievements are its glory and its fatal weakness. Italians’ penchant for beauty – in sculpture,

paintings, clothing, and architecture – is, according to 19<sup>th</sup> century proponents of national stereotypes, actually a slavish devotion to fecklessness. Northern Europeans, by contrast, have been conditioned by particular historical circumstances to keep their appetites for luxury and aesthetics in check. Northern Europeans, went the thinking, knew how to appreciate beauty with studious affection. That was the right way to treat antiquities and artworks. Italians, by contrast, emasculated themselves for pretty things and thereby squandered their once-considerable political and martial strength.

This stereotype, which can be summarized as the theory of *cultural retardation*, finds its fullest explication in Germaine de Staël's 1807 novel *Corinne, ou l'Italie*. Mme. de Staël placed Italians in the category of Southern European peoples, a classification she took for granted as undisputable reality (for critical discussion of national stereotypes: Patriarca 2001). Northern and Southern European peoples, Staël argued, developed very different sensibilities about artworks and ruins because they experienced imperialism, economic transformation, and nationalism in different ways. By the time of the Empire the Italians had, under conditions of imperial despotism, given up the last vestiges of those civic virtues that Staël identifies with the Roman republic: "The Roman character, that miracle of national pride and political institutions, no longer existed. The inhabitants of Italy were disgusted with every conception of glory; they no longer believed in anything but sensual pleasure" (Casillo 2006: 16, quoting Staël). The long denouement of the Roman Empire explains, for Staël, why 19<sup>th</sup> century Italians eschew civic life and prioritize pleasure over glory. In short, Italians are *servile*, "the diametrical opposite of those Northerners who regard national and personal independence as their birthright" (Casillo 2006: 16-17).

Alongside the stereotype of cultural retardation, Staël developed a characterization of Italians as flighty – in other words, that they are given to deep but short-lived passions. Their love of sensuality and sentimentality, childlike impulsiveness, and lack of organizational skills made Italians wholly unsuited to philosophical or rational thinking (Casillo 2006: 17). Such traits produced excellent sculpture and painting, Staël admitted, but poor literature because the Italian language is “incapable of deep reflection or philosophical constructs.”

Staël’s writings merit consideration because she was an influential intellectual who traded ideas with some of the best minds of late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe (Isbell 1994). Cultural retardation and impulsive passion were attributed to Italians by a range of Continental thinkers – among them, prominent Italian thinkers and political leaders (Aliberti 2000; Duggan 2007; Gentile 2009). What was going on? As Braudel (1995 [1963]) reminds us, dividing Europe into peoples bounded by tropes and character traits was an essential feature of identifying and systematizing “civilizations” from Europe’s past and present. Operating through the lens of Northern versus Southern peoples (for example) required that those categories be filled: with theories, themes, earnest questions, and positivist solutions. Stereotypes underpinned the discourse of nationhood. Stereotypes were pernicious and they were effective. Collective self-understanding in Italy absorbed the negative images attributed to Italians by Staël and her ilk. The belief in a flawed national character is pervasive, and it feeds Italians’ explanation of themselves as bad at governance and economically emasculated (Patriarca 2010).

What does all of this matter for cultural power? First, the history of national stereotypes draws our attention to the dynamics of colonialism that relegated Italy to the margins of European politics (though fetishized as repository of ancient civilizations). Second, the cultural retardation thesis has never fully abated. Italians and non-Italians alike criticize “Italians” (as an

amalgamation) for corruption, organizational failure, and laziness, all of which are mobilized to blame “Italians” (again, the pastiche) for not taking better care of their monuments and ruins. Ironically, Staël wrote *Corinne* precisely at the moment when Italian engineers, archaeologists, art historians, and public administrators were overseeing the most systematic, best-organized excavation that the nascent field of archaeology had yet known.

### **From the Fires of Vesuvius: Forging patrimony at Pompeii and Herculaneum**

Pompeii, a once-bustling Roman city on the Bay of Naples that was sealed in volcanic ash by the explosion of Mt Vesuvius in AD 79, was first rediscovered in 1599. Workers digging a water channel came across a wall with paintings and an inscription. Domenica Fontana, an architect, briefly examined the finding. Fontana ordered the wall to be re-covered by soil. Pompeii lay dormant until it was rediscovered again in 1748. This time, the discovery caused a sensation. A stream of foreigners toured Pompeii during the last three decades of the 18<sup>th</sup> century: antiquarians, “virtuosi,” poets, librettists, novelists, diarists, painters, professional archaeologists, psychologists, and other curiosity seekers (Hales & Paul 2011). They ranged in social status from lowly vagabonds to heads of state. Pompeii was a fashionable address on the Grand Tour. It was also a flash point.

The King of Naples tasked a military engineer with overseeing the excavation, and the discipline and orderliness of the project in its initial stages was to inform field excavation henceforth (Cooley 2003). But the king’s interest was in locating fine art and bringing it to his Neapolitan palaces. Scholars and travelers from Northern Europe objected, accusing the king of provincialism and greed. Some of them attempted to take over the excavation, pointing to superior Northern knowledge of aesthetics and art history (Witucki 2011). Up to that point, after all, foreigners were free to set up excavation sites in Italy and remove what they liked. There was



no regulatory system to inspect their work, determine the distribution of artifactual findings, or insist on Italians' participation (Ceserani 2012).

Pompeii and Herculaneum thus became the center of a heated dispute between “owner” (the king of Naples), and “users” (classically educated travelers from the north) (Dwyer 2010). Although the northern travelers ultimately won the debate, the king and his successors shaped the narrative of the dispute, and of Pompeii more generally, in important ways: through acquisition and appropriation of property as patrimony, and management of the archaeological sites (d’Alconzo 1999). So while the artifactual findings of Pompeii were fair game for scholarly study and fair market circulation (an especially vexing point for the king), the finds belonged to the Italian people as objects of patrimony. Authority over the excavations would now rest permanently with the Italians, who also took control of developing the sites of Pompeii and Herculaneum as tourist attractions. Regulations clamped down on profiteering outsiders. One significant outcome of the Pompeii rediscovery and dispute, then, was the blueprint for modern cultural patrimony: the infrastructure of protecting and regulating sites, monuments, and artifacts privileges local expertise and control.

Another, equally important outcome of the dispute was more philosophical: the wedding of universality (“Roman antiquities matter to all of humanity”) with historical materiality as constitutive of a people (“The Pompeiian findings are part of the Neapolitans’ collective history”). The tight coupling of objects with peoples was not new, but its particular institutional guise was. This was a proto-nationalist fight. Italy did not yet exist as a nation-state but the defenders of cultural patrimony who sided with the King of Naples were Italians. They hailed from different kingdoms and city-states and would have sworn to any number of critical differences between themselves and the Neapolitans. But in the ancient finds at Pompeii, the

Romans, Barinese, and Sicilians found their own history concretized. Pompeii, then, and the social *experience* of Pompeii, helped lay the groundwork for nationalized culture. That groundwork was built upon in the decades after the fall of Napoleon, who represented the greatest threat to Italian artworks and monuments since the barbarian sacks of late antiquity.

### **Napoleon: Appropriation and restoration of Italian art**

The French occupation of Italy began in 1796. From 1802 to 1805, Italy was a French client state, and from 1805 to 1814 a puppet kingdom for the Napoleonic regime. During the long period of French control, thousands of artworks and monuments were taken from Italy to France. The list is impressive: the iconic bronze horses from Venice, Raffaello's *Transfiguration*, Mantegna's *Madonna della Vittoria*, *The Crucifixion of St Peter* by Guido Reni, Veronese's *Wedding at Cana*, and countless Greek and Roman statues from Naples and Pompeii (Ridley 1992). Artwork was taken from the Vatican, too: the Laocoön, the Apollo Belvedere, and the Venus de Medici all made their way to France. In 1797, on the anniversary of Robespierre's execution and the end of the French Revolution, the French Directorate organized a public celebration in Paris. The parade was akin to a Roman triumph, with ostentatious display of all the trophies that Napoleon had looted during his European campaigns (Hunt 1984). The parade went on for two days, from July 27 to 29 1797, from the Austerlitz district to the Champ de Mars, the gathering place traditionally used for the Revolution celebrations. The message of the display was clear: France's global supremacy was made manifest in her spear-won treasure.

The captured artworks did more than signify Napoleon's military prowess. They played a key role in the project of fashioning Paris as the new Rome (Huet 1999; Rowell 2012). Roman antiquities were to be symbols of *French* national identity and political legitimacy, just as the Parthenon marbles from Greece signified British national identity from London (Rose-Greenland

2013). By harnessing the magisterial symbolism of Roman antiquity, Napoleonic image-makers denied the Italianness of the objects – in short, they *de-nationed* the objects – and inserted them into a new national context.

Critics rallied. In France, the artist and architectural theorist Quatremère de Quincy criticized Napoleon's actions, comparing Napoleon to the Roman senator Verres, who was prosecuted in 70 BC for excessive appropriation of artworks from the Roman province of Sicily (Gerstenblith 2008: 525-526; Miles 2008). The Treaty of Vienna (1815) required that France give back the artworks that had been stolen during the war. A little more than half of the objects actually were returned, constituting the first large-scale restitution of artworks (Gerstenblith 2008: 526). The Treaty decision also effectively confirmed that national groups have legitimate claims on artworks that originated in the boundaries of their nation – even if the object in question was produced by an ancient civilization whose geographic spread does not coincide with the border of modern nation-states (as is the case with ancient Rome and modern Italy). France was also once part of the Roman Empire, and the southern French who lived among the ruins of Roman cities might well have argued against the restitution, on grounds that pieces such as the Laocoön and the Vatican Discobolus were part of their ancient heritage, too. In fact, Rome-based French antiquarians and scholars mentioned this point in letters and at meetings of antiquarian societies. That argument went nowhere. The principle of restitution, now better known as *repatriation*, privileged the national soil as the determinant of rightful ownership.

Pompeii, Napoleon, and the Treaty of Vienna: what, then, was the state of national culture and cultural power in Italy by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century? Western and northern Europeans still dominated the connoisseurial sphere of Italian antiquities. Men and women of the upper crust poured money into purchasing artworks and historic buildings, amassing collections

for their holiday homes in the English countryside or the suburbs of Paris and setting up private literary and art salons in refurbished historic *palazzi* (Ingamells 1996). Foreign visitors defined “Italian culture” by expecting to find it in specific venues: travelogues, research and performance academies, and “must see” lists for Grand Tourists. Italian artists and agents were active in procuring antiquities for their foreign clients to purchase. Non-Italian poets and novelists, meanwhile, fixated on Italian antiquities as tokens of a pristine and glorious past, unsullied by the excesses and depredations of modern Italy.

In the scientific realm, however, something different was happening. Italian scholars worked with foreign scholars at study institutes in Rome and Milan to devise influential schemes for categorizing and classifying artifacts. Italian archaeologists had primary administrative authority over excavation permits, and eventually had primary intellectual control over sites and their discoveries. Italian-language antiquities journals appeared with regularity in the late-19<sup>th</sup> century, enfranchising a broader readership among Italians and giving Italians a voice in controversies over objects’ meaning and worth (Ceserani 2012).

### ***Difesa dell’arte and the discourse of tutelage***

Florence was particularly hard hit by Napoleonic art appropriation, and the intensity of the city’s response was commensurate with the injury. After the withdrawal of French forces and the restoration of Florentine political autonomy, groups of intellectuals, poets, artists, and elected officials began meeting to discuss what could be done to get back the artworks taken under Napoleon (Balzani 2003). There were several organizations devoted to art and culture, including the Società Leonardo da Vinci, the Friends of Monuments (*Amici dei Monumenti*), the Association for the Defense of Ancient Florence, the Dante Society (*Società Dantesca*) and the Society for Dante Alighieri. Personal rivalries and philosophical differences kept these groups

apart, but gradually their members worked with each other and partnered with rival societies on a common goal: changing public opinion in favor of protecting Florentine cultural patrimony.

The *Associazione per la difesa di Firenze antica* (Association for the Defense of Ancient Florence) was established in 1865 by a cross-section of the organizations' members. The group began with 70 members, who spoke of Florence as a city "progressive and civil" but also as "a lamp glowing with antiquity, whose light reverberates through the centuries and will be snuffed out if the aesthetic crisis (*la crisi estetica*) is not reversed" (Balzani 2003: 15). The leaders of the *Associazione* articulated a philosophy of guardianship (*la tutela*). The city's cultural patrimony was in need of preservation and protection from the harms of daily life, they argued. Monuments and artworks were part of the fabric of Florence, yes, and an integral part of Florentine identity. But classic Italy would be finished forever if contemporary (19<sup>th</sup> century) Florentines did not use modern techniques to protect their cultural treasures. The philosophy of the *Associazione* thus framed their work as a matter of collective moral obligation.

Guardianship (*la tutela*) was the phrase of choice in public debates about cultural protection. The Florentine variant of this philosophy received national attention when one of the *Associazione* members, Giovanni Rosadi, was elected to the Camera dei Deputati. Rosadi went to Rome intent on scaling up local guardianship laws to the national level. In 1903, back in Florence, the *Associazione* pushed for (and secured) passage of a new local law that gave city administrators funds and authority to conserve and protect designated historic monuments. The public discussions that surrounded the law's passage were printed in newspapers throughout Italy, the idea of *tutela* began to merge with ideas of nationhood. At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the cult of the *memoria patria*, which was a strong theme in the Renaissance, resurged. Erudite Italians came to appreciate the *vecchio stile* (ancient style) in furnishings, architecture, and

literature. National leaders including Luigi Rava, the powerful Camera representative from Ravenna, spoke about the potential of artistic and natural beauty to serve as a vehicle of nationalism. Rava and his ideological colleagues argued that organized, state-sanctioned guardianship of the *memoria patria* could constitute a powerful mechanism for making Italians feel as though they were national members, or “fare gli italiani.”<sup>19</sup>

The trick was to deal with the problem of ownership. The guardianship laws already on the books – in some cities, for over 100 years – prohibited people from inflicting specific harms on specified objects (razing, defacing, exporting) and vested responsibility for guardianship in local authorities. What such laws generally did not do was grant ownership of historically significant objects to public authorities. They also did not make provision for enforcing guardianship laws. This meant that enforcement was haphazard. It also meant that Italian owners of private collections could give away or sell objects to foreigners without penalty. And antiquities and ruins discovered on privately owned land belonged to the landowner. The moral force of *tutela*, in short, was not matched by a strong enforcement apparatus. Nor was there a consistent philosophy of keeping intact a *national* collection of historically significant objects.

The question of ownership was a recurring theme during the decades-long discussion about art policy. I will have more to say about this particular question in Chapter Four, when I discuss archaeologists, museums, and experts. At present, I want to examine the semantics of the *politica d’arte* discussion and how the land mines of private versus public ownership were defused. One key move was to invoke *patria* rather than *nazione*. *Patria* became *pro-politica d’arte* speakers’ preferred term for unified cultural heritage because it both avoided the ideologically problematic *nazione* and drew on ages-old, Romantic discourse about fatherland

---

<sup>19</sup> To be clear, Rosadi is not the source of the phrase *fare gli italiani*; Massimo d’Azeglio was.

and the natal soil. From 1903, national newspapers published impassioned editorials in favor of central government control over the excavation and circulation of antiquities. Influential editors at both the *Corriere della Sera* and the *Giornale d'Italia* supported the idea of a national policy of art. An editorial from left-leaning *Il Giornale d'Italia* in September 1903, addressed how *tutela* might be entrusted symbolically in the national community and instrumentalized through the central government. The editorial was written by Alberto Bergamini, a leading light in Italian newspaper reporting who was an outspoken advocate of government supports for national unity.

The editorial read:

[We say that] the Italian government should have not only an economic, foreign, domestic, and ecclesiastical policy, but also an art policy (*una politica d'arte*). Why should this be and for what purpose would such a policy aim? On the forty-third birthday of the Italian nation, the heritage of four or five civilizations is both glorious and a major responsibility. [...] The possession of so many famous monuments [...] infects us now, more than ever, with the biting urge to pay most careful attention to our works of art, to protect them (*salvaguardare*) from the snares of time and men, to entrust in the people of Italy the protection of the monuments of Italy (*la tutela dei monumenti*), and to commemorate the great historical traditions that accompany our conception of these works. [We say yes]: to reinvigorate the people of Italy and render them a more profound Italian national consciousness, the Italian government needs a policy on art. While for some people [in the world] art remains a luxury (*un lusso*), in Italy art is the grounding of our national spirit, and radiates perennially for thirty centuries.<sup>20</sup>

Bergamini's essay was unambiguous: guardianship of cultural patrimony would stimulate the collective consciousness of Italians, and the unified government was precisely the organ to organize the effort. His final sentence hints at a class dynamic that would have been all too obvious to his contemporaries involved in the *politica d'arte* debate: art should not be a "luxury" available to the privileged and wealthy few; it should, rather, be widely enjoyed by the national

---

<sup>20</sup> Alberto Bergamini, "Politica d'arte," *Il Giornale d'Italia*. September 10, 1903.

community because art is where the national spirit originates. Bergamini's enthusiasm for democratizing art and antiquities is a commonplace of cultural heritage discourse today, but in his time it was controversial. The whole point to guardianship, his detractors argued, was that it only works if private owners take custody of precious objects and sites and keep them safe from "the people."

### **Nation-state: Making Italians through Antiquities**

We have seen the action at the top: government officials and scientific leaders promoting bold new legislative structures to control and consolidate national culture. What of non-elites, of laypersons and everyday citizens? This, in fact, was a key concern for intellectuals and cultural reformers. A common complaint was that ordinary Italians did not properly appreciate their cultural heritage. They needed to be instructed. In other words, national heritage needed to be constructed, to be made real and *significant* for everyday people. This is why the first government unit with responsibility for administering the 1909 law was the Ministry of Education. The ontology of the law was prescriptive and reformative rather than punitive (it became punitive in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century). Educating Italians about their patrimony was understood to be a way of improving them more generally: morally, physically, and intellectually.

It was in this spirit that Gustavo Strafforello undertook a monumental project: a comprehensive encyclopedia of Italy's natural and human-made features. The full title gives a sense for the scope of the effort:

*La Patria: Geografia dell'Italia. Cenni Storici – Costumi – Topografia – Prodotti – Industria – Commercio – Mari – Fiumi – Laghi – Canali – Strade – Ponti – Strade Ferrate – Porti – Monumenti – Dati Statistici;*



*Popolazione – Istruzione – Bilanci Provinciali e Comunali – Istituti di Beneficenza – Edifici Pubblici, ecc., ecc.*

*The Home Country: Geography of Italy. Background – Morals – Topography – Commodities – Industry – Commerce – Oceans – Rivers – Lakes – Canals – Roads – Bridges – Railways – Ports – Monuments – Statistical Data; The People – Education – Provincial and Local Budgets – Charitable Institutions – Public Buildings, etc. etc.*

Over the course of twenty-five volumes, Strafforello provided his readers with an abundance of information about the cities, regions, and villages of the Italian peninsula. The pedagogical, reforming goal of his project was always clear. The cover presents Roma, the female personification of the city, seated in front of a map of Italy with her right arm resting on a globe (Image 5). Roma is identifiable by the scaly aegis on her right shoulder (the aegis originally an attribute of Athena) and the helmet. Roma was used extensively in ancient Roman visual culture, and was reasserted in the visual culture of Risorgimento Italy – the mothering figure providing a stable, legitimate autochthonous image in a turbulent political moment (Romani 2002).<sup>21</sup> With her left hand she pulls back a curtain to reveal the façade of the Campidoglio, long-time emblem of civic harmony in the city of Rome and architectural gem of Michelangelo. A beam of light radiates from behind the papal statue on top of the Campidoglio. A stand of olive branches, the classical symbol of political harmony, features in the foreground of the Campidoglio. The image links classical civilization with modern Italian achievements in politics, culture, and geography.

The first volume appeared in 1890, and the rest followed over a ten-year period. Each volume included statistical charts, tables, and foldout maps to provide a scientific basis for Strafforello's discussion. Sketches of breathtaking vistas, line drawings of statues and buildings,

---

<sup>21</sup> Decorating the book cover with a personification rather than a (real) king or statesmen also signaled the substance of Strafforello's project. As Agulhon demonstrates in his study of Marianne in French Revolutionary visual vocabulary, personifications offer collective abstractions with messages that are specific yet flexible, adaptable to shifting political dynamics (1981: 12-15). Roma, on Strafforello's cover, simultaneously links the capital of modern Italy with the achievements of ancient Rome.

and quotations from famous persons provided irrefutable evidence of Italy's *bellezza più famosa* (most famed beauty). For Strafforello, the statistical and geographical dimensions of his work were inextricably linked with the three core ideas of *patria*, *paese*, and *tesoro* (homeland, landscape, and riches). The city of Torino, for example, is described as having an “excellent geographic location” rivaled by few Italian cities (Strafforello 1890: 28). It was because of its superior location – close to the Alps, situated near clean rivers and having a favorable climate – that the Torinese had created a beautiful city. Torino was stuffed with monuments that add “flavorful ornamentation” to the streets, piazzas, public gardens and square, and churches to public life (Strafforello 1890: 32). Ten pages’ worth of commentary and sketches informs readers of the monuments’ appearance, display places, makers, inscriptions, and significance. The catalogue of monuments, like the catalogue of piazzas, palaces, and public buildings also included in the Torino entry, document the attributes of the city and place each category of object into the broader picture of inventorying the nation’s treasures.

What was the purpose of such a publication? The “sad and humiliating fact” was, Strafforello asserted, Italians were ignorant of their own treasures:

[...] the artistic treasures of Italy are more appreciated by foreigners than by Italians. The best evidence you have of this is in the classic general Guides that are sold on our borders in all the languages of Europe, and which only in the last couple of years have Italians imitated with their own Italian-language versions; Guides, which serve to render greater and more instructive the admiration of our beauty and of our treasures. (Strafforello 1890: vi).

Italians had no excuse not to be masters of knowledge about their own glorious history, landscape, and treasures, according to Strafforello. Such was the seduction of Italy’s history, literature, science, art, archaeological riches, industry and commerce, that foreigners’ spirits were deeply moved. An encyclopedic inventory, Strafforello argued, would show all Italians that they

had “reason to go forth proudly, no longer remaining subordinate to foreigners in the work of illuminating our homeland [*la patria nostra*]” (Strafforello 1890: vi).

Strafforello’s project was firmly rooted in nationalist ideology, a point he happily acknowledged. There were some “cosmopolitan demagogues” who would undoubtedly criticize any effort to consolidate the peninsula’s human and artistic features into a single inventory and aggrandize it as a single, national entity. These cosmopolitans, Strafforello wrote, were the same ones who wished to “abolish the State, the family, and private property” and substitute those “cardinal virtues” with “social chaos and primitive barbarism” (Strafforello 1890: 1). It was precisely because these dangerous ideas needed to be crushed that a comprehensive reckoning of Italian treasure was necessary. Only the “relazione compiuta” (complete accounting) could give Italians the knowledge and cultural education they needed to stand tall among the best nations of Europe (Strafforello 1890: 2).

With Stafforello’s publication we arrive at a key moment in the formation of indexical history, which I defined in the first chapter as a narrative of the past focused on quantity, categories, and organizational procedures. The complete accounting presents Italian culture horizontally, as a vast collection of things, rather than vertically, as single objects or sites with deep resonance. The vast collection, Strafforello suggests, requires expert management.

The modern innovation of Strafforello’s project becomes clear when we compare it with earlier versions of cultural encyclopedias. For example, Vasi’s ten-volume *Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna*, published in Rome 1747-1761, featured large pictures of monuments and ruins with small captions of simple, factual information. The monuments and ruins selected for inclusion were not meant to be a comprehensive list, but rather the “best of” Italian material culture. The Vasi drawings mix the mythical with the real. The drawing of St Peter’s basilica

depicts *putti* dancing on either side of the building's entrance. The drawing of the house of Romulus at Rome, meanwhile, is complete fantasy: no remains of the structure have ever been found (assuming it existed), and the drawing in Vasi's book is pure conjecture. Vasi's publication was aimed at foreign visitors – a pricey memento for genteel veterans of the Grand Tour and an inspiring study guide for those preparing to embark on one (Coen 1996). The Italian readership of *Delle magnificenze* was limited to elites, some of whom gave copies of the publication to foreign guests as presents.

The key points of contrast between Vasi and Strafforello are thus: in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, cultural encyclopedias were primarily for foreign collectors and were grounded in historical fantasy and iconic imagery; one hundred years later, the cultural encyclopedia under Strafforello was grounded in numerical information, rigorously accurate drawings, and text aimed at an Italian readership. The Strafforello reader was meant to finish a volume with mastery of knowledge and pride in the art. The objectivity and quantification of 19<sup>th</sup> century science that I earlier associated with professional archaeology here intersects with collective cultural identity to create a new form of historical experience.

Indexical history emphasizes categories and objective procedures over icons and myths. It is not the case that Strafforello avoided classicizing icons. The book's cover, after all, features an enormous mythical figure of Roma. But the figure is inserted among the instruments of enlightened thinking: the globe, the map, and the telescope. Roma is, moreover, relegated to the cover. Whereas the Vasi drawings mix mythical with real within the same frames, the Strafforello drawings separate them consistently. Between the front and back cover of a Strafforello volume, the globe, map, and telescope will guide the readers' rational inquiry.

Statistical knowledge of the nation and its people was a staple of nation-state formation. Such knowledge was normally restricted to city sizes, death and birth rates, health, natural resources, and commercial activity (Patriarca 2003). Stafforello extended the realm of statistical knowledge to culture. His specific intervention was to instruct Italians how to think about and *see* the monuments and historical sites within their midst. By continually using the language of first-person plural possession (“our bridges,” “our monuments,” and so forth), the author stressed collective investment in such assets. He rendered normal the collective ownership of cultural sites, monuments, artworks, and the cultivated landscape.

### **Making Italians, Making Italian National Culture: Early 20<sup>th</sup> century developments in antiquities management and narrative**

Art [...] will have its just accounting and its honor; art, which is not a poem, not a dream, but which integrates itself into a social function, because it is for art and in the name of art that the salt miner from smoking entrails of the earth and the astronomer descending from the stars, shining in joy, meet the same pleasures and comfort of the same pains. So art has a social function, it is a social benefit, and this is what we can expect from the protection of art. (Hon. Giovanni Rosadi, Camera dei Deputati, Rome, May 24, 1909)<sup>22</sup>

Giovanni Rosadi was a key figure in national legislative affairs in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and worked closely with Minister Luigi Rava on the law to nationalize antiquities and fine arts (“per le antichità e le belle arti”). He sparred with elite lawmakers, dealers, and collectors as he pushed for the legislation, arguing that the government was the more appropriate and stronger protector of antiquities. Dealers and collectors, he suggested, had a role to play in helping the government to conserve and protect antiquities but that work had to be done within

---

<sup>22</sup> *Discussione del disegno di legge per le Antichità*, Atti Parlamentari Camera Deputati, Sessione 1909. Discussioni 2, 24 maggio – 18 giugno 1909, #234. The quotation is from page 1415.

and on behalf of public institutions – not within the confines of private salons and *Wunderkammer*.

Rosadi's stirring prose, a portion of which opened this section of the chapter, compelled a sufficient number of his fellow Deputies to vote in favor of the law. His insistence on art's social benefit and social function was repeated in mass periodicals of the time. In this context, key phrases including *il popolo* (the people) and *la pubblica* (the public) were repeatedly invoked. But Rosadi, like many of his fellow lawmakers and cultural adjudicators, was not a revolutionary. "The people" were not intended as the direct owners of antiquities. Their patrimony was a collective good, owned in the abstract. The aim of the law was, Rosadi said, "la difesa del godimento pubblico" – literally, the defense of the public's enjoyment of art. The *godimento pubblico*, he explained, involved protecting cultural treasures *from* and *for* the people<sup>23</sup> The distinction he made was between *il popolo* – the people as an abstract idea, in this case a *national* abstraction – and *la gente*, the folk or actual, living, imperfect men, women, and children. In short, everyday Italians were not to be trusted with the safekeeping of antiquities. The government would take on this work instead, and so create an ideal national people.

The issue was how to convince ordinary Italians that they had the right to enjoy their national culture. "Nation" and "public enjoyment" were new and still abstract concepts that were difficult to understand for the majority of Italians. For a start, what did it mean to have the right to enjoy something? The enjoyment of antiquities and other protected cultural goods was shaped by the expertise of state and academic actors, who prescribed correct ways of viewing antiquities in state museums, galleries, and public spaces such as piazzas, parks, and municipal buildings. The fact that enjoyment, or "godimento," was conflated with shared ownership was doubly

---

<sup>23</sup> *Discussione del disegno di legge per le Antichità*, Atti Parlamentari Camera Deputati, Sessione 1909. Discussioni 2, 24 maggio – 18 giugno 1909, #234. The quotation is from page 1414.

confusing. The same ordinary Italians who dealt intimately with antiquities for years, for example through happenstance finds in the countryside or on the *latifunda* where they worked, were now told that their former ways of handling and owning antiquities were incorrect. Correct enjoyment was scripted by the state and took place in close contact with the state. To understand the approach of kingdom officials in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century to controlling the people's behavior as cultural citizens, it may be helpful to take a step back from the issue of culture and look at a complementary one: the Italian state's antimalarial campaign.

From 1904 to 1914 the government launched an all-out assault on malaria. The aim was to eradicate the disease from the Italian peninsula, a mission seen as integral to the wellbeing not just of Italian bodies, but of the body politic as well. Improvements in the people's health, the reasoning went, were "essential to strengthening state authority, bolstering the economy, and countering the appeal of socialism" (Snowden 2006: 61). In order to make the campaign work the central government undertook a number of interventions. It purchased quinine wholesale on the international market and distributed it to local authorities for free distribution to the poor (Majori 2012). It established rural health stations and dispatched doctors and nurses to administer quinine and teach peasants how to protect themselves from the disease. When field workers reported that rural residents were still resistant to their efforts and mistrustful of quinine (widely suspected of causing miscarriages in an attempt to eradicate the unwanted poor), the government supported rural schools. Here, teachers instructed children in literacy and mathematics as well as home economics and malarial prophylactics. It was social medicine in which society as a whole was the patient and the treated areas were poverty, housing, diet, and knowledge (on the concept of social medicine see also Mitchell 2002).

The state worked assiduously to medicalize rural Italy, in spite of numerous challenges. The line between good health and disease was often blurred by the fact that peasants were in chronic bad health. They were unconvinced by state officials' insistence that quinine and window screens would create good health. Moreover, the idea that peasants had a right to health was radically new. Peasants had traditionally accepted their lot; folk sayings and stories naturalized disease as a part of the human condition, woven into Catholic narratives about suffering in the earthly life. The notion that the state could play a role in guaranteeing health would seem to usurp God's power and push peasants into an uncomfortable (because unfamiliar) relationship with the state (on the state's usurpation of sacred tasks: Loveman 2005).

In a similar way, I suggest, and in the same time period, state officials worked hard to link public health with a robust national culture. The idea was not just that the ancient artifacts and ruins found within the *patria* were nice to have; their safekeeping was somehow *vital* to the sustainment of the national community and therefore of the nation-state itself. Returning to the inquiry that opened this chapter: Why were old objects consolidated in an elect category known henceforth as "national culture"? The first step in this was to *define* that culture as patrimony – a gift from the national community's ancestors – and to *delineate* the material that belonged to that patrimony. Just as state-employed physicians were working to convince peasants that there were "good" and "bad" categories of health, so state-employed archaeologists and art historians were creating categories of material culture that belonged to the nation. Ordinary Italians who had once understood an old clay bowl to be a useful bucket or farm implement now had to be taught that it was an antiquity and thus part of their cultural legacy. Public enjoyment was conditioned on the state's presumption of legitimate ownership.



## **Between Wars: Administering Nationalized Culture from 1909 to 1945**

With the passage of the 1909 law, state officials set about operationalizing the new regulations. Archaeological superintendents were restructured (and several new ones established). The Ministry of Education established posts and offices dedicated to the management of excavation sites, newly discovered objects, and significant ruins and museum collections. Several Italian scholars have perceptively recounted this history (Serio 2003; Troilo 2005). Two noteworthy dynamics can be distilled from the literature: first, although archaeologists, art historians, and textual specialists were apparently willing to work with and for the relevant government offices for cultural management, civil servants typically shirked from cultural management positions – a situation that persisted at least until the 1960s and resulted in several generations of low-performing government workers being relegated to cultural offices; and second, the 1909 law did not put an end to international trafficking in Italian antiquities. Through ineffective enforcement and continued, local-level participation in unauthorized excavating, collecting, and selling, state-owned cultural objects slipped away from the national community.

The rocky afterlife of the 1909 law can be explained in part by the volatile political context. Futurism, the artistic movement that was also a social vision for Italy, downplayed ancient materiality and emphasized instead an abstract, streamlined visual vocabulary that signaled Italy's liberation from the burden of its history (Conversi 2009; Gentile 2003). This vision appealed to, among others, Gabriele d'Annunzio, the influential poet and proto-Fascist leader who insisted vehemently that Italy was not a museum and would only progress by turning its back on ancient things and ideas (Hughes Hallett 2013: chapter 1). The intersection of Futurism with national antiquities contains fascinating questions and problems concerning the experience of cultural identity and social memory in Italy. Although it is beyond the scope of my

argument to discuss these problems in detail, it should be noted that the period 1909 to 1922 (the year Mussolini ascended to the office of Prime Minister) was characterized by violent disagreement over the role of antiquity in Italian identity and political ideology (see especially Gentile 2003 for the authoritative history).

Mussolini's rise brought a semblance of calm to the question of cultural identity, mainly by asserting a vision of modern Italy through the lens of *Romanitas*. While Mussolini sympathized with major tenets of the Futurists' view of Italian society and its natural categories of inclusion and exclusion, he parted company with their mistrust of antiquity. For Mussolini, antiquity offered renewal and inspiration to the Fascist nation (Arthurs 2012). In 1922 he wrote,

Rome is our point of departures and reference; it is our symbol, or if you want, our myth. We dream of a Roman Italy that is wise and strong, disciplined and imperialist. Much of what was the immortal spirit of Rome is reborn in Fascism. [...] Not only were the Romans soldiers but also excellent builders who could challenge, as they did challenge, time.<sup>24</sup>

Fascism would “glorify the nation,” according to Mussolini, by sacralizing Roman history as national myth. In Mussolini's vision, this was not a myth in the sense of lies or fictitious stories, but in the sense articulated by Zubrzycki: as “stories that are posited by a given social collective as real, true and important. Despite often being themselves ideological products of long conflict, myths present themselves as natural and uncontested” (Zubrzycki 2011: 22). In 1922 Italians were not, however, worthy of that legacy, according to Mussolini. The “Italian race” would have to be “remade” in order to become the true and worthy heirs of the Roman historical legacy.

When Mussolini swung his pickaxe in the Roman Forum to open ceremoniously a new phase of excavation and recovery, he was urging his fellow Italians to take up comparable feats of

---

<sup>24</sup> Mussolini, B. 1922. Dal primo discorso alla Camera alla Conferenza di Cannes (22 giugno 1921-13 gennaio 1922). Published as part of the *Opera Omnia* series of Mussolini's writings. The quotation comes from *Opera Omnia* vol. 17: p. 161. The translation is from Gentile 2009: 169.

strength to show themselves the modern equivalent to the tough and enduring Roman soldier (Gentile 2009: 168). Mussolini agitated for armed conflict throughout the 1920s, first on the homefront and then abroad as the new Fascist empire moved into Africa. But only war on a grand scale, he argued, would properly christen the new Rome.

The sites and objects of the ancient Roman legacy were swept along in the Fascist fascination with historical legacy and national rebirth. In 1939, months before the German invasion of Poland, Fascist members of the Camera dei Deputati approved major changes to the 1909 law. Antiquities remained state property, but newly empowered officials would now tightly control their circulation. Among other things, government officials could now remove antiquities from private owners if the owners were deemed enemies of the state – even if the antiquities had been grandfathered in as legitimate private property under the 1909 law.

Mussolini's use of ancient Roman history and objects, along with narratives of manliness, imperial expansion, and family loyalty in constructing Fascist identity, is well known (Berezin 1997). Of central concern here is that by seeming to abuse the intrinsic cultural properties of antiquities to support a totalitarian ideology, Mussolini inadvertently contributed to post-war efforts to reconstruct national culture in such a way that it would henceforth be an object of *humanistic* heritage protected from totalitarian exploitation.

### **Post-war: National Culture from the Hague Convention to the Art Squad**

After the Second World War, Italy was faced with redefining its role in the international political arena. The state's change of allegiance in the closing months of the conflict may have assuaged domestic guilt at having supported Hitler initially, but the victors did not easily forgive Italy's Axis sympathies. The problem for Italian officials was how to manage the nation's "spoiled identity" (Rivera 2008). Images of jack-booted supporters of il Duce parading through the streets

of Rome seared the memory of an international audience (Gentile 2009). To cleanse the taint of fascist militancy, Italian leaders settled on a political arena in which they could play a safe yet strong role: culture.

Against this background another important social process was underway. The Italian public was coming to terms with a sea change in cultural life. Alessia Ricciardi argues that the 1950s was characterized by a new set of aesthetic practices that re-appropriated classical Roman images and re-incorporated them into a new, emancipatory imagined community that was to replace the Fascist ideology of conformity and aggression (Ricciardi 2012). Ancient sites and monuments were no longer the weapons of Fascist doctrine; they were the building blocks of a new Italian identity that was at once portable and tangible. Meanwhile, there was mounting interest in repatriating works of art that had been taken from Italy by German and Allied forces during the war.

In the two decades after the war, then, Italy's leaders came to recognize the strong potential of cultural policy to enhance political identity. Precisely when Italy was struggling to carve out a new role for itself in global politics, cultural policy emerged as a key arena of international negotiation and cooperation. By becoming a leader among UNESCO nations and pushing aggressively for particular types of policies and treaties, Italy leveraged the popular issue of cultural stewardship to its benefit. Despite this seemingly smooth resurrection, the Italian state implemented haphazard, inchoate cultural policies throughout the forty five-year period between the fall of Fascism and the rise of neo-capitalist governing philosophies. The government units responsible for managing the nation's cultural portfolio, including the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (MiBAC), were relegated to the sidelines of the most

important political debates (Bianchi, Torrigiani & Cere 1996: 302). From the outset, however, the TPC showed itself to be a different sort of cultural administration unit.

### **Contentious cultural identity and the founding of the Art Squad**

The Command for the Protection of Cultural Property, in Italian the Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, was founded in 1969. The historical moment in which the Art Squad was born is remembered in Italian as *la presa della parola* or “the capture of speech.”<sup>25</sup> This was a collective act by which ordinary citizens from a variety of occupations and social positions began to question long-standing boundaries between state officials and the people (Bonomo 2013). Italy was a key Cold War battleground in Western Europe (Ginsborg 2003). From the end of the Second World War, the US government poured money into the Christian Democrats party (Democrazia Cristiana; hereafter abbreviated as DC) in order to vanquish the Italian Communists. The cultural sphere was keenly contested because of its potential to spread ideas non-violently (and seemingly without corruption). Ricciardi argues,

In the immediate aftermath of the Liberation [the fall of the Mussolini regime], power devolved to the Democrazia Cristiana and culture to the PCI [Partito Comunista Italiano] [...]. At least through the 1960s, the Communist Party in fact exerted widespread influence by means of publishing houses, the writings and teachings of intellectuals, and the cinema. (Ricciardi 2012: 4 [Kindle edition])

But while the Left dominated the literary sphere, the Right gradually took the upper hand over cultural administration through routine government assignments. A series of legislative changes in the 1950s and 1960s concentrated authority over antiquities in ever-narrower categories and institutional procedures. Nevertheless, outside the Camera dei Deputati, Italy was in the throes of

---

<sup>25</sup> *Presa* is from the Italian verb *prendere*, “to grab” or “to capture.” The translation “the capture of speech” is literal English, but is better expressed with the colloquial phrase “to take the floor.” It refers to the struggle for authority in the public sphere. See further: Bonomo 2013; Ricciardi 2012.

anti-status quo protests. So how and why did the Italian government pick this moment – specifically, 1969 – to extend its reach into the cultural realm with a military-police art squad?

Two factors were at play: (1) domestic politics and increased concerns about the erosion of culture through economic development; and (2) increased international attention to the protection of cultural heritage and the argument that every nation-state has its own bounded, discrete patrimony. I begin with the first set of factors, concentrating especially on the years immediately prior to the creation of the Art Squad.

### **Domestic politics and cultural administration**

By the early 1960s state officials and cultural experts were dissatisfied with the organizational structure that had grown up around cultural protection laws. Critics said the structure was haphazard and unfocused. The Ministry of Culture was seen to be a dumping ground for inept civil servants (Balzani 2003). Its budget was insufficient to give cultural administrators effective decision-making authority. In February 1964 Giovanni Battista Pitzalis, the 56-year-old elected member of the Chamber and loyal Christian Democrat, sponsored a bill aimed at reforming cultural administration. It was to start by creating a study commission. Pitzalis urged his colleagues that,

[...] the important field of antiquities and fine arts should be placed in the best conditions to carry out its activities toward the [...] prompt intervention for the protection of historic heritage [...], the restoration of artistic objects, movable and immovable, for the conservation of historical and ethnographic property of artistic interest, for the management and collections of works of art, and finally for conserving the natural beauty and landscape. (Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati, IV Legislatura, Discussioni, Seduta del 13 Febbraio 1964, p. 4945)

He also told them that the current administrative system was too unwieldy to meet those tasks:

The national territory is currently divided among 60 archaeological superintendents for monuments or galleries and sometimes just for antiquities. But some of them [superintendents] have to oversee monuments, galleries *and* antiquities. They also operate nine autonomous institutions of major importance, among which are the Central Institute for Restoration, the National Prints Cabinet, and so forth. [...] The vastness of the superintendents' territories [...] makes for an untenable situation. (Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati, IV Legislatura, Discussioni, Seduta del 13 Febbraio 1964, pp. 4945-4946)

Pitzalis asked his colleagues in the Camera to support administrative reforms. Italy was “under siege” (*presa d’assalto*) by tourists interested in Italian art and the landscape. Protecting those treasures and keeping them at their best was a matter of economic sensibility and national pride, but it required more and better staffing. Italy’s art, he argued, was the patrimony of the Italian people and an asset of all humanity, to which a global audience turned its admiration and surprise. Specifically, Pitzalis asked for a more generous pay structure; long-term career trajectories for the best administrators; and a clear hierarchy of duties.

One of Pitzalis’s fellow Deputies, Jole Giugni Lattari, stood and spoke in support of his measure. Lattari was a member of the rightwing, neo-Fascist Movimento Sociale Italiano party. She argued that the protection of cultural goods was a non-political issue that should engender support from everyone.

“Our artistic patrimony is perhaps our greatest national asset,” she said, “and it is one of the few points on which we can speak without politics: diverse groups, in fact, have declared their agreement with the necessity of safeguarding Italy’s historic sites and bringing into law and order the private initiatives that have constantly caused such damage to art, archaeology, and landscape” (Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati, IV Legislatura, Discussioni, Seduta del 13 Febbraio 1964, pp. 4947).

Lattari broadly agreed with Pitzalis but urged for even stronger measures to protect the nation's cultural patrimony. She cited a particularly insidious form of damage to artistic and cultural patrimony: private initiatives. This referred not to natural erosion but to industrial development and unauthorized exploitation of the landscape. Lattari, in sum, was warning against modernity's encroachment on Italy's pristine past. To stave off that encroachment she proposed to extend the state's culture power into the private sphere by demanding the registration of privately-held monuments and land parcels and monitoring their use by private individuals, churches and civic groups.

If Lattari's proposal struck her colleagues as overly intrusive, Roberto Lucifredi, a Christian Democrat and powerful member of the Camera since 1948, supported the idea by putting the situation into more familiar terms. He invoked the "classic example" of Umbria, asserting the sacrality of cultural patrimony to Italians' identity:

[In Umbria] the artistic, archaeological and landscape patrimony take on particular value, being a crucial part of the life and social content of the people and of their economic and civil sphere. Without all of this, the region itself would amount to very little (*sarebbe ben poca cosa*). (Atti Parlamentari della Camera dei Deputati, IV Legislatura, Discussioni, Seduta del 13 Febbraio 1964, p. 4952)

It was senseless, he continued, to think of Umbria as containing a "historic landscape" or an artistic heritage of ancient pedigree. The landscape and the heritage were continuous. Whatever historic interest they held was seamlessly bound with contemporary life and local identities. The "harmony" between the ancient Umbrian landscape and its contemporary people could only be explained, Lucifredi argued, by the local economy. Years of sharecropping and agricultural work meant that smaller town centers remained isolated and residents were bound primarily through kinship structures and intimate associations. What changes had occurred in the cultural landscape



were the outcome of the “limited and refined work of centuries.” The ancient fabric was essentially unchanged, and modern Umbrians did not think of themselves as living in a museum. They understood the landscape as home and the monuments as family.

This harmony, though, was threatened by economic development. Like Lattari, Lucifredi condemned “private initiatives” that were destroying Italians’ cultural heritage. *Il miracolo economico* (economic miracle) was a period of sustained economic growth from the end of the Second World War through the late 1960s. Not only was the Italian economy transformed from agricultural/subsistence to manufacturing/industrial, its culture underwent massive change, too (Zanardi 1999). As rural dwellers poured into cities for better-paying jobs, urban life took on a new vitality and contentiousness. The complex of images and practices known as “Italian culture” was questioned and reconfigured (Forgacs & Gundle 2007). Family life itself was perceived to be under intense pressure, with cosmopolitanism encouraging associations based on professions and social pursuits rather than kinship. Although the material standard of living had vastly improved for the great majority of the population, many people worried that moral standards had worsened and culture was eroding (Ricciardi 2012).

Socio-economic context is important for making sense of Lattari’s and Lucifredi’s anxieties. From their perspective Italy’s landscape and cultural treasures were threatened by industrial development, urban growth and increased wealth (which allowed for, among other things, purchasing cultural treasures for private enjoyment). Since the landscape and objects were themselves the lifeblood of Italy – its ideological bedrock – any threat to them was in fact a threat to the stability of the nation-state. The fact that Lattari and Lucifredi hailed from conservative political parties suggests that their anxieties may have been fueled by additional concerns for the stability of the family. The ideal of the strong family as a bulwark against

pernicious foreign influences was a mainstay of Mussolini's Italy (Berezin 1997; Helstosky 2004). In the post-Fascist period the Communist party tried but failed to offer an alternative to this view, in the form of advocacy for workers' groups. The DC and the Movimento Sociale Italiano filled the ideological gap left by Mussolini when they stressed the urgency of protecting Italy's communities through cultural objects and spaces. By the 1960s, right-leaning parties were mobilizing cultural objects to shape the symbolic national family. Lucifredi's impassioned plea to defend national culture and, in so doing, defend the Italian family had the desired effect. The Camera voted in favor of Pitzalis's motion, 198 in favor with 169 ballots *schede bianche* (which could signal negative votes or Deputies' unwillingness to take a position on the issue).

What the Deputies actually approved was the creation of a commission to study the administration and organization of Italy's cultural goods and sites. Francesco Franceschini, a teacher from Venice and prominent DC member, headed the commission. The commission comprised sixteen members of parliament and eleven experts in art history, archaeology, law and library science. They were charged with revising the administrative framework and funding mechanisms for cultural heritage protection. After a thorough three-year study period of the situation, the Franceschini Commission produced nine core recommendations for action (Lambert 2010):

1. Establish a security service to protect cultural heritage.
2. Suspend building projects in areas of monumental, archaeological or landscape interest.
3. Conduct a rigorous inventory of Italy's cultural heritage.
4. Allow the public to access historic buildings normally reserved for State offices.

5. Eliminate unacceptable interventions into cultural heritage, including unauthorized tourism development.
6. Establish centralized institutions for scientific research, conservation, restoration and documentation work on objects and sites of historical interest.
7. Train scientific and technical staff responsible for the autonomous administration of cultural heritage.
8. Promote contemporary artistic production.
9. Conduct a national campaign to promote public awareness of the importance of cultural heritage.

The first of these bears directly on the origins of the Art Squad. The text of the Commission's report read as follows:

Use of security services. For the provision of an official seat and for the execution of its [assigned] actions, the Superintendents [of archaeology] will avail themselves of a security service of administrative autonomy, with the powers necessary to carry out their prescribed functions. (*Atti della Commissione d'indagine per la tutela e la valorizzazione del patrimonio storico, archeologico, artistico e del paesaggio* 1967, dichiarazione 16, pp. 4-5.)

This was a vague recommendation on the part of the Commission. Its members wanted state archaeology offices to work with security services to protect sites of interest from theft and damage. They did not, however, agree on the nature and scope of such a security force. Should it be handled at the local or regional level? Should the national government itself design a new security service? Disagreements among Commission members resulted in a compromise recommendation, with lawmakers left to figure out how best to incorporate it. In late 1968 the suggestion was turned over to the Ministry of Education, which was quietly asked to act on it. The result was the forerunner to the Art Squad, the Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Artistico (NTPA)

founded in May 1969 with just three employees who reported to the Minister for Education on the entirety of the Italian peninsula's cultural health.

### **The Art Squad Today: Making Cultural Power a Bureaucratic Mission**

Between 1970 and 2011, the unit recovered approximately 468,000 items of cultural interest.<sup>26</sup> In the past three years, the Art Squad estimates that it recovered €343,758,995 worth of fine artworks and antiques, along with a further €380,000,000 in rare books, archaeological objects, and contemporary artworks.

In recent years the Art Squad has grown in size and institutional stature. The Ministry for Internal Affairs designated the NTPA as a Special Force of the Carabinieri in 1992, at which point its functions and duties were formalized under the name of Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Artistico (TPA). As a special unit of the Carabinieri, the TPA became part of an organization with an illustrious history stemming from the *Risorgimento*. By the end of 1994 the Carabinieri TPA had 145 staff members. Just four years later the unit size had nearly doubled and the TPA, now renamed as the Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (TPC, or Art Squad), became the largest police force in the world specializing in the protection and recovery of national culture.

Today the art squad has 300 agents spread across the Italian peninsula. It claims to have recovered 390,000 items of “national cultural treasure” since its founding. Its headquarters are located in central Rome, but the Art Squad describes itself as a force without a single head but with a “capillary presence” – spread thin but everywhere, even in the “privi di strade” (impenetrable) spaces of the country. This text comes from the Art Squad-funded film *Gli Anni del Drago*, one of several media productions made available to the public through schools,

---

<sup>26</sup> Pers. note from Laurie Rush, 11/27/12.

museums, tourist offices and television as a public relations strategy. The TPC's arrangement of power is highly effective in creating an all-pervasive state presence (Foucault 1980). Rather than weakening the central node, capillary structures strengthen centralized power by making it invisible yet inevitable. Here, power penetrates every crevice of Italy: uniformed and plainclothes officers patrol Italy from the sky and under sea, giving them "ample presence everywhere" (*Gli Anni del Drago*). This policing model is symbolized by the Art Squad's coat of arms, which presents a dragon looming over the ancient Pantheon in central Rome. The dragon's tail snakes around the piazza in front of the building, as if to show the extent of its reach in public life. From its origins as a small, somewhat obscure state office the Art Squad has grown to be the highest-profile manifestation of the state's control of national art objects.

### **Art Squad in the public eyes: *Missione: TPC* and Repatriation**

No Italian citizen is too young to join in the moral mission of the Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale. A youth-oriented video game, available for free on the Art Squad web site, encourages Italian children to learn the proper rules of engagement with the nation's material culture. The Art Squad web site introduces *Missione: TPC* as

an educational game, primarily targeted to young children between 6 and 12 years of age, in which Sandrino, accompanied by Marshal Lightning, will have to discover the meaning of the acronym "TPC" by exploring the specialized Command of the Carabinieri of that name and learning the main issues relating to the protection of cultural heritage.<sup>27</sup>

The game, entitled *Missione: TPC*, allows the player to take a tour of the head office in Rome with an animated art squad agent. Where the wildly popular American game *Tomb Raider* has

---

<sup>27</sup> Text from the web site of the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale: [http://ArtSquadweb.carabinieri.it/ArtSquad\\_sito\\_pub/](http://ArtSquadweb.carabinieri.it/ArtSquad_sito_pub/). Accessed 5/20/2013.

players traversing action-packed caverns in search of valuable artifacts, *Missione: TPC* has players navigating bureaucracy. Here, the player adopts the guise of a young boy (male sex is standard) with brown hair and brown eyes. The blond, blue-eyed, broad-shouldered agent towers over the boy. Players can choose which rooms of the Art Squad office to visit. In the conference room they can click on a map of Italy, which shows them where the other Art Squad offices are located, and to learn about noteworthy *beni culturali* from a selection of Italy's regions. Presidential decrees, thanking the Art Squad for their work on behalf of the nation, decorate the pressroom. A general's office boasts a fine Renaissance painting; clicking the mouse on the painting reveals the story of the painting's creation, its shocking theft from Italy, and the heroic efforts of the Art Squad to bring it back.

The construction of good and evil in *Missione: TPC* is especially noteworthy. The state, and above all its art squad, is presented as the force for good. Foreign museums and home-grown looters are enemies of culture and therefore of the state. There is no ambiguity. In imparting this message to Italian children, the video game does not encourage them to patrol the field sites and raid smuggling rings. Instead, they score points by demonstrating their knowledge of the bureaucratic arrangements and organizational routines of the Art Squad. Players are rewarded for learning and following the impersonal rules that characterize modern states. This is Indiana Jones with triplicate government forms.

### **The International Community and the Institutionalization of National Patrimonies**

So far the discussion has focused on internal or domestic factors, but external factors were also influential in forming the art squad. In response to widespread theft of artistic objects during the Second World War, the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict was installed in 1954. This was the first international legal instrument designed

to protect nations' cultural stock, which it defined as "movable or immovable property of great importance to the cultural heritage of every people" (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954. Chapter 1, Article 1). The Hague Convention obliged member countries to identify and protect their own cultural property during peacetime and refrain from deliberately damaging or destroying the cultural property of others during times of war. It also instructed member countries to set up special units within military forces to protect cultural heritage:

The High Contracting Parties undertake to plan or establish in peacetime, within their armed forces, services or specialist personnel whose purpose will be to secure respect for cultural property and to co-operate with the civilian authorities responsible for safeguarding it. (Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict. The Hague, 14 May 1954. Chapter 1, Article 7.2)

At the time of the Franceschini Commission's report, however, no nation-state had formed such a unit "within their armed forces." By doing so in 1969, the Italian government took a leadership position in the international arena of cultural policy. Its Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Artistico anticipated the 1970 UNESCO treaty requiring member states to set up art protection forces. UNESCO officials praised the fledgling Art Squad as exemplary. During the 14<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference in Paris during October and November 1970, Italian officials presented the NTPA model to the general assembly and expounded on its merits. This discussion presumed the compatibility of Italy's model with other nation-states' needs. It presumed, too, unanimity of opinion on what should be defined as a nation's cultural heritage and how it should be regulated.

## Repatriation and the global reach of Italian cultural power

The messiness of reconciling ancient and modern “maps” of cultural heritage disappears through the work of repatriation, when the Art Squad and the government’s prosecutors team up to win back misappropriated artworks from foreign museums and collectors. In May 2013, for example, an American veteran of the Second World War repatriated to Italian state ownership eight Renaissance books that the soldier had found in the ruins of a shell-damaged church in the southern Italian town of Minturo. The Italian Ambassador to the United States, Claudio Bisogniero, spoke at the ceremony that was held in honor of the books’ repatriation:

[This case shows] how important it is to protect and safe guard the cultural historical heritage in these cultural treasures, because they are stepping stones of our foundation [and] at the same time they are a very strong link to our prosperity.<sup>28</sup>

The books, Ambassador Bisogniero stressed, held much more than academic significance. They were fundamental to understanding the development of contemporary Italian culture and linked with Italians’ prosperity (whether financial or cultural prosperity he did not specify). In content and sentiment, Bisogniero was treading a rhetorical path much traveled by other Italian public figures. General Gianfrancesco Siazzu, former commander of the Arma dei Carabinieri, makes plain the centrality of cultural objects to contemporary Italians:

The identity of a people is acknowledged in its history, in its traditions and in the significant witness offered by works of art and cultural goods, the fruits of genius of their artists. To attack or even just to squander a Nation’s patrimony of archaeology, history, and art signifies,

---

<sup>28</sup> <http://9musesnews.com/2013/05/29/the-return-of-8-old-books-to-italy-by-the-monuments-men-foundation/> (accessed 6/4/2013). See also the official press release from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which stresses the veteran’s “great example” in doing the “right thing” for Italian cultural heritage: [http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala\\_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2013/05/20130530\\_monumentsmen.htm](http://www.esteri.it/MAE/EN/Sala_Stampa/ArchivioNotizie/Approfondimenti/2013/05/20130530_monumentsmen.htm) (accessed 6/4/2013).



therefore, a permanent injury to the “memory” of a civilization, producing damage [...] which deprives present and future generations of the possibility of deciphering their historical, cultural, and social journey as viewed from what has passed.<sup>29</sup>

In a similar vein, Antonio Manganelli, head of police and director general of public security, explains that what is at stake in the Italian security forces’ battle against the illicit art market is “the continued moral and intellectual development of every social community.”<sup>30</sup>

Repatriation cases highlight the tension between state and nation that pervade the sphere of cultural power (Cuno 2008; Merryman 2006). The Art Squad must, like any other government unit, abide bureaucratic rules and procedures that attest to the credibility of the state. But if this were all that it did, nobody would be compelled to protect art or believe in the construct of cultural patrimony or heritage. The emotional language of repatriation, then, invites people to have an affective relationship with objects – to see them not just as objects, in fact, but as heritage; and not just any heritage, but the national culture of Italy. This ongoing dialectic between state and nation in cultural power will come to light more clearly in the next chapter, where I turn to the problem of repatriation and the indexing of Italy’s imagined national family.

---

<sup>29</sup> Siazzu, G. 2008. In Donato, L. (ed.) 2008, *La Felicità di un Ritorno*, 13. Rome: Gangemi Editore.

<sup>30</sup> Foreword, A. Manganelli. In Donato, L. (ed.) 2008, *La Felicità di un Ritorno*, 11. Rome: Gangemi Editore.

## CHAPTER 3:

### ***Patria* and Repatriation: The Myth of Family in Cultural Power**

The idea of cultural heritage in Italy is sustained by the discourse of family, which is itself rooted in the ideology of *patria* or fatherland. I have two main tasks in this chapter. The first is to explain how *patria* provides the cultural logic for the state's repatriation of antiquities, and how repatriation configures in the sphere of cultural power. The second is to examine the effect of repatriation on the meanings of the objects themselves and on the recounting of national history.

#### **Homecoming**

Rome, January 2008. In a conference room of the office of the chief prosecutor, journalists, archaeologists, elected officials, and representatives of the Ministry of Culture waited expectantly for the guest of honor. They awaited not a person, but a pot. At the appointed moment, an archaeologist from the Soprintendenza Archeologica (the state's archaeological superintendent) and an agent from the Carabinieri dramatically unveiled the object of interest: the Euphronios *krater*, a 5<sup>th</sup> century BC clay mixing bowl that had been the focus of an intense, years-long dispute between the Italian government and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Despite persistent claims by the Italian prosecutor's office that Met curators had knowingly violated international law by purchasing the artifact in the first place, the museum's

capitulation was unexpected. Rocco Buttiglione, the ex-Minister of Culture who had pushed for the *krater*'s return, was euphoric: "The Italian state has won."<sup>31</sup>

The "win" came after years of legal wrangling. Italian prosecutors began pulling together their repatriation case in the early 1990s, when fresh evidence came to light suggesting that the *krater* was smuggled out of Italy and into the Geneva Freeport, a storage facility immune to Customs inspections located near the international airport in Geneva, Switzerland. The Euphronios *krater* entered the Met's collection in 1972 through, Italian authorities claimed, a network of illegal looters and unauthorized art dealers extending into the dusty outback of central Italy (Watson & Todeschini 2008). The Met's director, Philippe de Montebello, was initially unmoved by Italian lawyers' arguments that the "hot pot," as it came to be known in the American press, had been looted and should be repatriated.<sup>32</sup> He later complained to a packed auditorium at the New School for Social Research in New York, "The whole process of how Italy prosecuted its case in the United States [was] shabby" because the evidence was circumstantial (Waxman 2008 quoting Montebello: 198). Worse, Montebello continued, Italian authorities had violated the norms of institutional politesse by communicating primarily through the popular media rather than through direct, discreet discussions with his office.

Montebello, a French citizen who reached the apex of his career in the United States, is known for his bespoke double-breasted suits, hint of aristocratic pedigree, and self-described old guard museum management style. Speaking in late February 2006, a week after he signed the historic accord that ceded ownership of the *krater* to the Italian government, Montebello explained in an interview with the *New York Times* that the Italians' legal case was, for him, "an

---

<sup>31</sup> E. Povoledo, "Ancient vase comes home to a hero's welcome," *New York Times* 1/19/2008. Accessed online November 2012: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/01/19/arts/design/19bowl.html>.

<sup>32</sup> R. Berman, "Met chief to discuss 'hot pot' in Rome," *New York Sun* 11/11/2005. Accessed online November 2012: <http://www.nysun.com/new-york/met-chief-to-discuss-hot-pot-in-rome/22903/>

irritant [...] a vexing issue [to be put] behind you.” He was evidently still angered by the outcome of the case, and bemused by what he saw as a worrying trend in the world of buying and selling cultural objects:

I am puzzled by the zeal with which the United States rushes to embrace foreign laws that can ultimately deprive its own citizens of important objects useful to the education and delectation of its own citizens. [This legal trend] has huge consequences. It means that the amount of archaeological material that is acquired by American museums — which has already enormously diminished in the last few years — will become a trickle.<sup>33</sup>

What Montebello did not allude to was the possibility that the hot pot signaled a new dynamic in the international field of cultural power. Americans citizens’ interests in objects and their delectation are not the priority. American museums, even wealthy and influential ones like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, are no longer calling the shots in the field of antiquities collecting. “Source country” governments are now in the driver’s seat.

The repatriation turn in international cultural relations bases its instrumentality in new legal rulings and provenance data, yet its affective force is rooted in a centuries-old cultural narrative. This is the narrative of *patria*, and I will argue in this chapter that it is crucial to understanding why repatriating old things matters to modern nation-states. *Patria* is baked into the social ontology of Italy, though since the last hundred years it is overlay by new laws, technologies, and regime of knowledge that have challenged traditional ways of experiencing *patria* through historical objects. The new regime of knowledge, together with state bureaucratic procedures, has produced an *indexical* version of historical experience that emphasizes quantity

---

<sup>33</sup> Montebello, interview with the *New York Times*. Randy Kennedy and Hugh Eakin, “Met Chief, Unbowed, Defends Museum’s Role,” Feb. 28, 2006.

of culture while offering ritual adoration to a small handful of iconic objects including the Euphronios *krater*.

While events surrounding the Euphronios *krater* were played out in major media outlets another case, of more humble material, was working its way through the Italian courts. Two men, identified simply as “B.M.” and “C.S.J.” in court documents, were prosecuted in the District Court of Rome for possessing ancient coins without authorization. The ruling explained:

The defendants are accused of having had in their possession several coins from the Punic, Greek, and Roman periods, belonging to the heritage of the State (“patrimonio dello Stato”), and the product of clandestine excavations (“frutto di scavi clandestini”), having acquired or received them from unknown persons.

[...] During the [search] of the defendants, it was determined that the defendants also had numerous coins in a bag, which the Carabinieri decided to seize after having had them inspected by an expert from the Soprintendenza Archaeologica of Rome who, after a brief examination, had concluded that the coins from the 20<sup>th</sup> century had no value, while the coins from the Roman era seemed real and thus had historical and archaeological value.<sup>34</sup>

These facts, declared the court, were not in dispute: the defendants were in possession of objects classified as cultural patrimony of the state. The coins, the defendants protested, were not very valuable. There were many more like them. They were not in especially good condition, and they were a common mint, meaning they were unlikely to fetch a high price at auction or through under-the-table sales.

It remained for the judge to decide whether to sentence B.M. and C.S.J. for having received stolen property or for having appropriated archaeological goods, a violation of Article 176 of DLgs 42/2004, the most recent iteration of Italy’s national cultural patrimony laws. The

---

<sup>34</sup> Tribunale Roma, Dec. 5, 2007. Il Giudice della IV Sez. Penale dott. Salvatore Iulia alla pubblica. *Translated from Italian*

judge found them guilty of the latter offense and sentenced them to two months in prison, a fine of 300 Euros each, and payment of court costs. The coins were transferred immediately to the Director-General for Archaeological Resources of the Ministry for Cultural Resources and Activities (Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali or MiBAC). In cases like these, the next step is for a complex of offices and staff members to decide what to do with the coins and other recovered objects of cultural and historical interest to the state. Thus the one-of-a-kind, masterpiece Greek *krater* and a mass-produced Roman coin, in spite of divergent aesthetic qualities, hold equal symbolic weight: both enter the same landscape of legal codes, bureaucratic procedures, and narrative parameters that make cultural power.

### **Lost and found**

The stories of the Euphronios *krater* and the ancient coins illustrate the state's organizational approach to controlling nationalized antiquities: *repatriation*, whereby government lawyers pursue the return of a cultural object from a foreign government or institution; and *domestic policing*, whereby officers of the state's Art Squad hunt down and arrest unauthorized excavators, collectors, and dealers of antiquities. Driving this organizational arrangement is a powerful discourse of loss and recovery. Loss is an essential feature of heritage, as I explained in Chapter Two. In the sphere of cultural repatriation, loss has a double meaning: the civilization that once was, and the objects that sometimes slip away.

Since Montebello's accord the Metropolitan Museum of Art alone has repatriated to Italy sixty-one objects of Greek and Roman interest – a small fraction of that Museum's collection, to be sure, but an expensive fraction and one with enormous symbolic worth.<sup>35</sup> As for domestic

---

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Kline, November 14, 2013. "Approaching Conflicting Duties. The Role and Responsibilities of Institutional Lawyers in Dealing with Objects Having Title Issues." Paper presented at DePaul University's Center

policing, in 2009 and 2010, the most recent years for which comprehensive figures are available, 942 persons were found guilty of “crimes against cultural and landscape resources” in the Italian courts and sentenced to pay fines or spend time in prison.<sup>36</sup> Domestic policing and international repatriation are two sides of the same coin – the sustainment of cultural power. Ideology links them symbolically; the Art Squad links them institutionally. For the sake of organizational clarity, I focus in this chapter on repatriation. I will discuss domestic policing in Chapter Five, when I examine the experiences and perspectives of unauthorized excavators.

Scholars broadly agree that states rely on national culture for a semblance of credibility, offering an emotional base from which to enlist citizens’ loyalty in times of instability (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1983; Leoussi 2006; see also: Billig 2004 on the “unwaved flag” of nationalism). Their work explains the relationship between national culture and the state through the rubrics of state formation, origins of nationalism, and the economic and political power of marketing patrimony. In order to ensure the smooth management of a prescribed understanding of the national community, the state relies on an elaborate discursive and legal network of cultural regulation (Agulhon 1981; Mosse 1985). The Art Squad plays a central role. In the course of regulating the circulation of antiquities and prosecuting their wrongful possession, the Art Squad creates a powerful narrative that links ancient artworks with an imagined national family. In so doing, artworks cease being inanimate objects and become members of the national community with needs, feelings, and rights similar to those of flesh-and-blood Italians.

---

for Art, Museum, and Cultural Heritage Law conference, *Restitution and Repatriation: The Return of Cultural Objects*. Chicago, Illinois.

<sup>36</sup> Source: Istituto Nazionale di Statistica (Istat).

## **Analyzing repatriation through *patria* ideology**

*Patria*, the Latin word at the core of “repatriation,” packs hefty meaning into its six letters.

*Patria* derives from *pater* (father) and translates to “country” or, more precisely, “fatherland” in English. A simple translation is inadequate, however, to grasp the deep cultural resonance of *patria* ideology. In the Roman *imperium* the idea of a *patria communis* or communal fatherland was essential in knitting together the far-flung peoples of the Empire into a politically loyal entity (Ando 2000; Erskine 2010; Meyer 2004). Any given person had more than one *patria* at a time: one’s family, town of birth, and province could all draw on one’s loyalty. But the *patria communis* transcended all smaller *patriae* by creating an imagined imperial community. By choosing to begin with ancient Roman ideologies of *patria*, I do not necessarily cast my vote with Anthony Smith’s theory of modern nation-states evolving slowly from ancient polities and *ethnes*. Smith’s position, in contradistinction with Hobsbawm’s and Gellner’s, sets narrow constraints for thinking about antiquities and collective identity. The theories of Smith, Hobsbawm, and Gellner conceptualize antiquities as being either essential, fixed markers of ethnic identity (Smith); or convenient (because plausibly authentic) vehicles for whatever political ideology is current (Hobsbawm, Gellner).

Cultural objects allow us to sketch a new approach to the problem of materiality and nationhood. Working with the concept of *patria* opens our inquiry to issues of fictive kinship, loyalty to political abstractions, and the incoherence of multi-culturalism. Each of these recurs over time as problems for rulers, state officials, and governing bodies. Cultural objects serve to concretize links within and across *patriae*, enduring change and conflict even as human bodies die and decompose. Why, to paraphrase Benedict Anderson, do citizens feel strongly enough about their national community that they are willing to fight and even die for it? Because the



ideology of *patria*, the hallmark of western secular nation-states, configures country as natal forebear, fellow citizens as brothers and sisters, and the nation (a word extending from the Latin *nascere*, “to be born”) as mother. *Patria* and the rhetoric of fictive kinship through nationhood have sustained a generous body of work (Anderson 1991; Ando 2000; Brubaker 1992; Herzfeld 2004; Milnor 2005). My intervention is to demonstrate the vital role played by antiquities in these phenomena.

Through the early-modern period in Europe, princes were the embodiment of the abstract collective (whether tribe, kingdom, or empire). This changed after the French Revolution, with the toppling of the sovereign and the dissolution of corporate identity in the body of a single figurative father. This transition had considerable impact on familist rhetoric and ideology in the western nation-states that emerged after 1789. It also had implications for the symbolic and material landscape of collective identity and civic belonging. The physical home of the collective body was no longer the royal or imperial household. By household I mean its flesh-and-blood princely members as well as the castles they inhabited – castles that had, for centuries, fostered links and loyalty among subjects through their visibility and symbolic weight (Blanning 2002). While the bureaucratic headquarters of modern secular nation-states, whether Parliament or the Camera dei Deputati, offered powerful images of democratically elected bodies at work, they were poor substitutes for the symbolism of the royal household. As Choay (2001 [1992]) has argued, historic monuments rose to prominence in part as a response to this gap: in the absence of a royal household, public monuments served to concretize and personalize subjects’ collective understandings of the political community.

Intellectual attraction was at play, to be sure, but also the seduction of sensibility: antique works fascinated them by their size, by the refinement and mastery of their execution, by the richness of their materials. Treasures,

haloed in the aura of the marvelous, [they carried] a quasi-magical value [that was extended] to the vestiges of antiquity. (Choay 2001: 22)

It was sometime during the 15th century, Choay writes, that Italians began to understand ancient Roman monuments as belonging to a distant past. This was a break from the thinking of medieval clerics, whose 8th to 12th century texts treat the antique world as both impenetrable and near at hand. “Impenetrable,” according to Choay, because Roman or Romanized territories had become Christian, and the pagan vision of the world no longer prevailed; “near” because the symbolically liminal monuments were physically to hand and thus available to sight and touch. Their haptic availability rendered ancient monuments transposable into the Christian context where they were reinterpreted according to Christian codes (Choay 2001: 23).

The sovereign and his household may have disbanded, but the *need* for them did not. Using Julia Adams’s theoretical framework of familist rhetoric in state building, I demonstrate how repatriation transposes ancient objects into a contemporary national community. This phenomenon allows us to study the persistence of *patria* ideology over time, shedding important new light on repatriation and its relationship to cultural power.

### **Objects and the varieties of historical experience**

Every antiquity has singular significance, which is reinforced through public displays and qualitative narration. When state officials bring the object back to Italy, it joins a set of repatriated antiquities (*reperiti recuperati*). The meaning of the set then subsumes the singular meaning of the object (Baudrillard 1988). In other words, the ancient coin, pot, or sculpture that was once regarded on its own terms is now significant because it adds to the collection of recovered objects – a cultural inventory of the nation-state. The work of repatriating antiquities, and thus of amassing that inventory, rests primarily with the Art Squad. Using the case of the

French General Survey of Historical Landmarks (“the Inventory”), Kowalski demonstrates that states’ inventories of their possessions, whether landmarks or artworks, serve dual purposes. In the case of the Historical Landmarks Inventory in France, it is, on the one hand, “a figure of speech: it is a metaphor both for the public property that is to be surveyed and surveilled and for the nation that is to be defended. [On the other] the Inventory is also an “effect” of power as a concrete organizational *dispositif* that operationalized, at its own level and its own range of action, the presence of “the state” on French territory” (Kowalski 2007: 84).

Building on Kowalski’s argument, the Art Squad’s Leonardo Data Bank – a detailed inventory of lost and repatriated cultural objects – is both a symbol of the nation-state’s cultural authority and a specific means of experiencing Italian history as an index. I wrote in the previous chapter about the Italians’ experience of their history being primarily iconic in nature up until the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Here, I examine the form of historical experience that superseded the iconic: indexical historicizing. When repatriated objects re-enter Italy, they do so as symbolic children of the nation who repopulate the *patria*. Simultaneously, however, they become data points in a collection. At the repatriation press conferences staged periodically by the Art Squad (and, occasionally, by its rival crime-fighting unit the Guardia di Finanza), every miniscule scrap of recovered material is laid out in neat rows on cloth-covered tables. The ensuing emphasis on quantity overshadows objects’ specific qualitative features. Italians are thus encouraged to understand their cultural legacy as too big for any one ordinary subject to appreciate. Indexical history is not an evil plot by state officials to program subjects’ perception of the nation-state’s past and present credibility. It is, rather, a byproduct of modern bureaucratic practices that, Max Weber reminds us, underpin every self-respecting nation-state. What the study of antiquities and their repatriation will show us, however, is that the impersonal rules of indexing do not neatly

excise family from the rational bureaucracy. Testimonies of Art Squad staff members will shed light on how feelings of kinship with objects are folded into the work of indexing.

This task, as should now be clear, requires that I place the “Art Squad effect” (to borrow language from Timothy Mitchell) in a critical frame of discussion. In so doing I am swimming against the scholarly tide. To my knowledge, there are no scholarly or trade publications that offer a sustained critique of the Art Squad. In the popular press and much of the academic literature on art crime, the Art Squad is showered with praise. As one recent paper put it, the Art Squad is “an example and model for developing similar capabilities in departments and ministries of defense in other nations” (Rush & Benedettini 2012). The Art Squad now claims to be the most successful government agency for cultural policy enforcement in the world, recovering no less than 10% of all the art “stolen” from Italy (in contrast with the 2.3% recovery rate averaged across other nations).<sup>37</sup> In the face of feel-good claims about its contributions to the protection of culture, who wishes to diminish the Art Squad’s achievements? I insist, however, that this is an important conversation to have because the Art Squad model is being actively promoted as the solution to other countries’ looting problems. With support from UNESCO the Art Squad has sent agents to Iraq, Kosovo, Peru and Guatemala in order to train local officials to monitor and regulate the circulation of cultural goods and sites. The effect of Art Squad operations extends beyond key looting networks and shady freeports, and into the essence of nationhood by constructing a specific experience of the past.

---

<sup>37</sup> Source: Rush & Benedettini 2012.

## ***Patria* and the dilemma of modern nation-states**

It is no accident that the French revolution took a position against the ruler King as well as the church, because both insist on a personalized embodiment of *patria*. The crisis of the secular democracy became how the governing establishment could maintain legitimacy and emotive, kin-like investment without the church or a royal family to provide strong paternal figures. How, in other words, can a nation-state convey *patria*?

In her study of elite merchant families in the Dutch Republic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Adams found that kinship ties and family structure were intimately bound up with the running of politics and the economy (Adams 2005). (Male) family heads chose male kin – sons, nephews, brothers, cousins, in-laws – to help lead the family business or forge friendly relations with rival families' businesses. Female kin played key roles, too, as potential brides who could link two clans legally and emotionally, and as unofficial mediators who were well placed to pass along information or smooth over difficulties subtly yet effectively. So pivotal were family membership and kinship dynamics in the running of the Dutch state that Adams theorized the state as *familist* in its structure. Adams emphasized two features of such a system: hereditary qualification and patriarchal power, rather than rational-legal procedures, in macropolitical authority; and the performance and public perception of gendered kinship identities (Adams 2005: 34-35). Placing male relatives in positions of civic or mercantile authority had the dual function of creating political and business alliances and advertising the patriarch's virility and morality. His house was seen to be in order (Adams 2005: 83-85).

What Adams demonstrated, in short, is that family ties were fundamental to the running of the Netherlands during the imperial period. With the French Revolution, the emotional component of the state was transferred from the king to *fraternité*. This transition pushes us to

think about *patria* and family in the modern, national context. Italians had to rely on the family because of the long period of fragmentation (political) through the centuries. Constant fighting, fragmentation along religious, linguistic, and political lines – this meant that for the state to have any legitimacy, it had to penetrate the local, co-opt it, or imitate it (Riall 1994).

In Weber's classic theorization of the modern state, family ties are separated out from the formal features of ordering society to achieve an impersonal bureaucracy. According to Charles Tilly's (1992) classic framework, states are "coercion wielding organizations that are *distinct from households and kinship groups* and exercise clear priority in some respects over all other organizations within substantial territories" (my emphasis). Divorced from the state as such, family relations are relegated to the nation – a word whose very etymology conjures birth and primal origins. However, Tilly's neat distinction between state and household does not account for the rhetorical slippages that constantly link them. Family is at once a potent symbol and an elastic concept. Its potency makes it an attractive resource for state officials looking to shape the behavior of citizens. Its flexibility makes this manipulation easier, more natural. Prioritizing family members' needs at the expense of breaking the law is an idea with which many Italians are comfortable. Loyalty to kin and to *alleati* (allies or friends) comes before loyalty to the nation-state (Patriarca 2010).

There is a dark side to kinship ties in public life: nepotism, properly termed "familism" or "clientelism." Both systems have overlapped or operated simultaneously in different regions and at different periods (Piattoni 2001). Clientelism connects people, power, and political favors through associative (not necessarily kin) ties. Its roots lie in the Roman system of clients and patrons, in which the former transferred their agency or capital to the latter in exchange for favors. A client might pledge his vote, for example, or his signature to a petition if the patron in

turn promised a job or the passage of a law favorable to the client's business interests. Clients were not necessarily biological kin of the patron but they were considered part of the patron's *familia* in the Latin sense of a group of people connected by social *and* biological relations (Saller 1984). In the modern definition of familism, on the other hand, kinship is central.

The pervasiveness and strength of clientelism and familism in Italy have drawn sustained criticism from a diverse audience. In his study of public life and family networks in Basilicata (southern Italy), the American political scientist Edward Banfield described as “amoral familism” the tendency of local residents to sacrifice the public good in the interest of protecting and favoring biological kin (Banfield 1958). This system was, he argued, the basis of a backward society. More recent studies have continued in the vein of moral judgment, blaming clientelism for rampant nepotism in hiring practices, economic stagnation and legal corruption (Rossetti 1994; for a critical analysis of clientelism in the Italian case, see Briquet 2009). Clientelism and *familismo* are part of the long catalogue of Italy's vices, correlated with social and financial backwardness, political scandal, and weak civic and national spirit (Patriarca 2010; Riall 2009).

Interpersonal links, whether kin or associative, are clearly very important in Italian civic life. This takes us back to the Latin *familia*, which included not just the nuclear triad of husband-wife-children but also extended relatives, slaves, clients, and other dependents. The core issues in the *familia* were power and obligation. The head of the *familia*, the *paterfamilias*, had power over his dependents. At the same time he had an obligation to look out for their interests and offer moral correctives that would help them live as fine, upright Romans. What was at stake was the continuation of the lineage, the reputation of the house, and the loyalty of the *familia* members to the *paterfamilias* and to each other.

In the case of contemporary cultural power, officials' narrative of antiquities as people – *Italian* people, lost members of the national family – makes antiquities seem less like a state-sponsored construct (heritage) and more like a natural, logical extension of individuals' biological families (culture). And if biological loved ones deserve the state's protection and support, it is only right that stone and ceramic "loved ones" be accorded the same treatment. This idea is crucial to understanding the significance of cultural repatriation. We can see how this social ontology obtains in repatriations of flesh-and-blood Italians. For example, when the journalist Giuliana Sgreba was freed by the Italian secret service from her Iraqi kidnappers in 2005, the press welcomed her back with rapture, praising her rescuers for a heroic *rimpatrio* that saved one of Italy's daughters.<sup>38</sup> My point is not that Italy is unique in using the discourse of family to shape the meaning of objects and people. The family is a powerful signifier of nation-state cohesion in many parts of the world. My point, instead, is that the combination of military power and antiquities makes the Italian version of familist discourse unique in certain ways.

Anderson's arguments from *Imagined Community* helped to frame our analysis of *patria* at the outset, and it is fitting to return to him as we shift our attention to the ways in which repatriation shapes relationships between *patria*, cultural objects, and the national family. One omission by Anderson is a clear analytical distinction between *patria* and family. In his arguments, the nation-state is caught between the family on the one side, and the *patria* on the other. The biological family unit, situated within the imagined national community, is shaped and subsumed by that imagined construct. Anderson does, of course, deal with cultural objects. Focusing on museums and the "museumizing imagination," he points to the creation and

---

<sup>38</sup> E. Wong and J. Horowitz, "Italian hostage returns home after second brush with death." *New York Times* March 5, 2005.



reproduction of museums and of the display spaces within. Of the (native, foreign) monuments that colonial rulers appropriated for their museums and private collections, he writes:

Monumental archaeology, increasingly linked to tourism, allowed the state to appear as the guardian of a generalized, but also local, Tradition. [...] But, as noted above, a characteristic feature of [this process] was infinite reproducibility, a reproducibility made technically possible by print and photography, but politico-culturally by the disbelief of the rulers themselves in the real sacredness of local sites. (Anderson 1991: 181-182)

Anderson hereby emphasizes the political affordances of monuments and antiquities for the national imaginary *outside* of the national center. In this light, appropriations and colonial collecting are key features of cultural conquest, political domination, and modular nationalism. Missing from this analysis, however, is the symbolic significance of antiquities and monuments at home in the national center. In the national heartland, citizens do not need to be reminded of their loyalty to a distant *patria* and national community. Instead, the challenge is to smooth the fissures presented by local identities and practices. The specific process of bringing a cultural object “home,” as we will see, reinforces the contrast between *patria* and everywhere else.

My discussion of *patria* and kinship – fictive and biological – has brought into focus the social ontology that underpins repatriation. The challenge for the secular nation-state, I argued, is to knit together local affinities into a national whole without reliance on church or sovereign to provide mythical paternal figures. Shifting our empirical gaze to cultural repatriation, I now demonstrate how antiquities help to constitute a modern *patria*.

### **Organizational parameters of repatriation and state effects**

In contemporary heritage discourse, repatriation refers to the general process of recovering an art object from wrongful owners or questionable display circumstances. Different nation-states undertake repatriation differently. In the United States, Native American artifacts are repatriated

to Native American nations under NAGPRA (the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act). The technical requirements of NAGPRA disputes structurally link museum staff and tribal representatives, with lawyers and government staff members playing supporting roles. The Department of the Interior receives initial claims from tribal leaders, and adjudicates on the central issue of whether the claimant tribes can prove “cultural affinity” with the objects in question. NAGPRA defines cultural affinity as:

a relationship of shared group identity which can be reasonably traced historically or prehistorically between a present-day Indian tribe or Native Hawaiian organization and an identifiable earlier group (25 U.S.C. §3001 (2)).

In adjudicating legal cases concerning NAGPRA claims, U.S. judges have tackled such challenging questions as whether and how to permit as evidence oral history (a traditional knowledge form among Native tribes); what is the burden of proof on tribes in proving cultural affinity; and whether scientific inquiry ever trumps tribal rights over human remains (Gerstenblith 2008: 854-865). Judicial opinions impact the application of NAGPRA, but legal reasoning is only one of several sources of influence on the process of repatriating human remains and artifacts to Native American tribes. Physical and cultural anthropologists and museum curators work with medicine men and chiefs to figure out when and how to effectuate a return. This is normally done with close contact with a point person at the Department of the Interior. The sorts of actors involved in NAGPRA repatriation differ from those involved in Italian *rimpatrio* cases. The Department of the Interior is tasked with managing national parks, wild animal populations, federal grazing lands, and Native American issues. By contrast, Italy’s Ministry of Culture (MiBAC), which ultimately oversees the repatriation of cultural objects, is tasked with managing and developing cultural sites and objects, the landscape, tourism, national

libraries, and historic archives. And in Poland the repatriation of cultural objects is overseen by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with the assistance of museum directors and art historians.

How a government handles repatriation – which departments are assigned administrative roles, what forms of expertise are mobilized, and what sorts of objects are contested – shapes the objects’ meaning. The organizational arrangements of repatriation should therefore not be taken for granted. These arrangements differ across national boundaries and draw our attention to variations in state effects. In Italy, the Art Squad is heavily involved in repatriation and, as such, has considerable influence on how antiquities are narrated and evaluated. This influence is made visible when the Art Squad collaborates with a state museum in exhibiting artifacts that have been returned to Italy. It is visible, too, in the press conferences in which the Art Squad announces a stunning recovery of purloined antiquities. I structure this section around these two key contexts: repatriation press conferences and repatriation exhibitions. Both contexts underlay the experience of Italian national history as indexical.

### **The grammar and ritual of repatriation in Italy**

Through television news programs, press releases, conferences, in-house publications, museum displays and commissioned films played on television, the Art Squad presents repatriation of artworks and artifacts as a moral mission. This is achieved in part by likening art theft to religious martyrdom:

Italy has always been flagellated by the plague (“dalla piaga”) of clandestine excavators. For decades, this torment has been encouraged by the unscrupulous international market. (My translation. (*Gli Anni del Drago* film, 2012: minute 21)

Here, the national body suffers from the welts of art thieves. These thieves care nothing for the health of the national body; pecuniary interests are their sole motivation. This message strikes

two nerves that have special significance in Italy. One is the sanctity of the holy body and the corporeal punishment it must suffer for its beauty and innocence. With the particular problem of robbing tombs, the nation must suffer for the richness of its patrimony. The other struck nerve relates to joining together for the good of the whole: *tutti insieme*. Clandestine excavators, in the Art Squad's reading, stand for the mass of cultural enemies who threaten the national body and violate the strictures of group cooperation and loyalty to the community.

Presenting clandestine excavation as an act of flagellation casts art protection as a sacred, moral duty, rather than as a bureaucratic procedure. But what defines morality in the nation-state context? The constitution serves as the main moral document. As an example of this, the nine justices of the United States Supreme Court function as high priests, ritually chosen to adjudicate on moral matters. What we see in the Art Squad's invective against tomb robbing is the weaving together of religion (flagellation, pestilence, sacred duty, with the tortured body of the *patria* – Jesus himself being a Catholic father figure as well as a Holy son) with the state by antiquities. To return to the Euphronios *krater*, archaeologists believe that it was unearthed from a tomb in Cerveteri (central Italy) (Hoving 1993; Meyer 1975; Nørskov 2002). We do not know how long the *krater* was there. Had it been used and cherished in Athens for a century before it came to Italy? Was it buried with a long-time owner, or added at the last minute as an auspicious grave good? Was the eventual owner a Greek-speaker or a Latin-speaker, and did he or she identify as Roman, Etruscan, Oscan, Greek, or something else entirely? Moreover, did these forms of identity matter then, and do (or should) they now?

When the Italian state asserts the Italianness of an object like the Euphronios *krater*, as it has done with dozens of objects with obviously Greek antecedents, it glosses the complexity of ancient cultural identities. Contemporary nation-state boundaries do not map neatly onto ancient

cultural identities (Woolf 2000). It is for this reason, perhaps, that when they “blitz” looters and recover art objects, Art Squad agents justify their work on grounds that they are restoring cultural goods to the national *family*, rather than to the bureaucratic state. There is a discourse and there are rituals of repatriation. In using the concept of discourse I include the linguistic tropes that recur in repatriation discussions, as well as non-verbal, symbolically based communications about artworks recovered for the nation. By rituals I mean press conferences and museum displays, which function symbolically as family re-unions. Discourse and rituals imbue objects with kinship characteristics and emphasize their emotional centrality to the national family. Through repatriation, the government has a powerful hold on the imagined national community. National imagination is not free to run wild. In Italy, state officials provide the script. Whether individuals accept that script, and how, is ripe for sociological investigation.

### **Repatriation press conferences: *patria* and indices**

The discourse of repatriation is articulated and constantly reproduced in press releases and in-house press productions. These texts include art view books, information brochures, exhibition catalogues, DVDs distributed free to schools and libraries, and film spots on evening television. Typically, they recount the sting operation or *blitz* that recovered the stolen art (or, in the case of international settlements, the details of the offending institution’s acquiescence); the agency or branch office involved in the work; and the number of objects, their types, and their hypothetical monetary worth. *Il blitz* is the word used in Italian to refer to the raid. It comes from the German *Blitzkrieg*, the lightning-quick military attack made (in)famous in the Second World War. The recurrence of the word *blitz* in discussions about art repatriation and recovery reminds us that the imagined national family is not the only source of metaphor. Repatriation press conferences are family reunions as well as military triumphs. More specifically, the state’s policy and military

power make the reunions possible. The military titles and uniforms, together with the language of attack, strength, and victory, combine with the language of family to make national unity (through cultural objects) a noble struggle (Image 2). Antiquities, after all, are not unique in being blitzed. Narcotics and illegal weapons are also periodically recovered by state agents and presented to the public through triumphant press conferences. What merits analysis, then, is why antiquities (among other cultural objects) are essentially framed as contraband.

For this portion of my study I examined twelve press conferences in detail. I was not able to attend any press conferences because none occurred during my stays in Rome. I relied instead on television coverage through *rai.it*, newspapers (online and hard copy), and press releases from the Art Squad and MiBAC web sites. To select cases for study, I limited my search to a 42-month window from January 2010 to the beginning of July 2013. I chose that start date based on the most recent major overhaul of MiBAC (mid-2009). I wanted cases that are most representative of how repatriations are handled now by MiBAC officials. Since the Art Squad did not undergo a major restructuring during the 42-month window, I considered it to be relatively institutionally stable over this period.

My analytical objective was to analyze press conferences because I wanted to understand how state actors narrate repatriated antiquities for a popular audience. To find cases, I began by searching the websites of MiBAC and the Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale for press releases about art recoveries. The TPC search function was linked with the central MiBAC search engine, so I searched the entire Ministry for relevant press releases. Press releases were a good place to look because MiBAC has a sophisticated public communications office that diligently releases information about repatriations. I also used the archival search function for *La Repubblica* and *Corriere della Sera*, two major, national newspapers. My key search terms were *rimpatrio*

(which turned up dozens of articles on illegal immigrants to Italy); “*recuperati reperti*”, “*antichità ritrovata*,” and variations on those words. I also used the word *blitz*, which turned up cases of sting operations on all manner of underground networks and crime rings.

Across the three main search methods, I located 26 cases of repatriation events that were given press conferences. It is possible that some repatriation events did not show up in my initial search because they were not announced in press conferences. From the 26, I pared down to a list of 12. I prioritized cases in which antiquities were brought back to Italy from foreign countries ( $n=7$ ). I also included cases of domestic recovery – that is, antiquities discovered through *blitzes* conducted in Italy ( $n=5$ ). Such cases differ somewhat in that they are not technically connected with winning back objects from foreign actors and institutions. But the recovery of artworks and artifacts within Italy also falls in the rhetorical and symbolic framework of repatriation. Domestic recoveries, too, emphasize the objects’ wrongful disinterment from the soil and their rightful place in the nation’s body of heritage.

Here I look in detail at two of the press conferences that I analyzed. They are representative of the main themes that I discovered in my analysis. A January 2012 press release from MiBAC, discussing the return of several artifacts, reads:

All the above masterpieces have finally returned on Italian soil, from where they had been unfairly transferred, many years before, by dishonest unscrupulous criminals (*criminali*) who, for sinister reasons of personal enrichment, attacked the spirit of cultural identity of the nation.

The recovered assets, as well as having a commercial value of approximately €2 million, represent, each in its own characteristics, highly valuable historical and artistic expressions and are of particular value as

testimony for future generations of consciousness and knowledge of their past and of the cultural identity of the Italian State.<sup>39</sup>

The text weaves together multiple value systems. The art pieces (“masterpieces”) have a monetary value that can be succinctly stated at two million Euros. But their value extends beyond pecuniary considerations. The artworks also have great value as “historical and artistic expressions” that will be highly useful to future generations of Italians as they seek to know themselves and their past. The explicit invocation of the “cultural identity of the Italian state” reinforces that it is worth protecting. It is noteworthy that the *state* is said to have a cultural identity. The state is normally presented as the rational force tasked with protecting the nation’s culture from greedy criminals. Here, the state is not distinct from the cultural sphere because it, too, has an identity that extends directly from the material culture of the national family. An “attack” on the nation’s cultural identity is an attack on the state itself.

At repatriation press conferences, recovered items are laid out ritually, in neat rows on tables covered with cloths. One or two items are selected for distinction, and their stories are told. A recovered Renaissance painting, for example, might be praised for its form and illustrious roots in the Florentine art scene. Just as Giuseppe claimed the Ligurian icon as belonging to “his” people, so the Florentine painting might be presented as especially important for the people of that region. In a conference held in July 2012, recovered marble sculptures were idealized as “true sons of Lazio who are finally at rest in their original home.”

Photographs attest to the visual impact of repatriation – specifically, the staging of antiquities’ rescue and renewal. Image 3 is a photograph taken at a July 2013 press conference in

---

<sup>39</sup> “Restituiti dagli Usa eccezionali reperti archeologici di provenienza furtiva e da scavo illecito in Italia.” Press release from the Ministero per I Beni e le Attività Culturali, January 20, 2012. Accessed 5/9/2013: [http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza\\_asset.html\\_7901052.html](http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/MibacUnif/Comunicati/visualizza_asset.html_7901052.html)



Foggia. We learn from a newspaper article that the press conference was presided over by Col. Luigi Cortellessa, Vice Commander of the Art Squad. Col. Cortellessa opened the press conference with this statement:

The sophistication of the items exhibited [at the press conference] is a tangible expression of our cultural heritage and material. Too frequently, archaeological pieces are preyed upon and exported illegally to beautify museums overseas. We want them to come back to their cultural place of origin to ensure that they can express fully our past civilization. For many years, foreign museums were the end users – the destination of a process of [excavational] depletion and looting. It is, in fact, a very serious crime to mutilate our land to enrich foreign museums.<sup>40</sup>

In the photograph, the sophisticated items referred to by Cortellessa are laid out on the conference table in front of him. The table is draped with a red cloth that reaches the floor. The surface of the table is divided into three sections of objects: from left to right, unpainted ceramic vessels of various shapes; two trays of coins and other small metal finds; and glazed or painted ceramic vessels. At the far right of the viewer is another table of ceramic vessels, these of larger dimensions and grander decorative schemes. Three Art Squad personnel preside over the table. They sit in a line across from the viewer. They are, from viewer's left to right, Cortellessa, Carmine Elefante (Commander of the Art Squad in Naples), and Stefania Michelange (Commander of the Art Squad unit in Bari). The text explains that the Art Squad offices of Bari and Naples recovered the objects through a joint sting operation called "Operazione Tomb Raiders."

The same picture appeared in regional newspapers and online news sites. The picture works with the text to draw attention to the size of the haul: 548 archaeological artifacts, 340 coins in silver and bronze, and small jewelry and precious stones with an approximate value of

---

<sup>40</sup> I. Macchiarola. 11 July 2013. "Le mani dell'archeomafia su Foggia." *Stato Quotidiano*. Accessed online: <http://www.statoquotidiano.it/11/07/2013/le-mani-dellarcheomafia-su-foggia/151928/>

more than 100,000 Euros. There was a human haul, too. Twenty-one people were issued search warrants and subsequently placed under criminal investigation. To put that in perspective, the article recounts that in 2012 alone, 125 people were denounced for crimes against patrimony in the province of Foggia.

The objects are presented without labels. They are spatially arranged in accordance with their genres or object-types, rather than by age, findspot, or function (these being a few of several possible alternative groupings; Edgeworth 2003). This arrangement – the objects’ anonymity, and their positivist association with scientific categories – constructs the recovered artifacts as a quantifiable victory. The meaning of each object is bound up with the monetary and symbolic value of the entire haul. *Operazione Tomb Raiders* is a success, we are told, because of the 548 artifacts and the 340 coins and jewelry pieces that it recovered – not because any one of those things is a cultural icon. The repatriation press conference is staged precisely so that the objects speak primarily on the basis of their aggregating powers.

Asserting the objects’ meaning in the aggregate might seem at first that I ignore recent developments in the sociology of materials, a literature focused on the ways in which phenomenological encounters with material objects shape the social world. Sociologists had traditionally located meaning in iconography, a dynamic package of figures, symbols, signs, and words that shape viewers’ affect and understanding (Alexander 2008, 2008a; Wagner-Pacifici 2005). Recent work challenges the primacy of iconography in meaning-making by arguing that materials not only enhance or assist with the transmission of images, but are themselves active creators of meaning (Acord & DeNora 2008; Griswold, McDonnell & Mangione 2013; Zubrzycki 2013). The new material agenda insists that the physical properties of materials must be accounted for in studying how and why objects mean what they do. Benzecry (2008), for

example, demonstrated the diverse ways that everyday materials acquire value. Focusing on the Boca Junior football club jersey, Benzecry found that fans' and players' strong identification with specific colors, design, and fabric type transformed a simple shirt into a totem. The jersey's symbolic work was threatened when a major transnational athletic corporation attempted to change its look and use a new, more modern fabric. Fans and players rallied round the shirt based on what they perceived to be its meaning-integrity. In other cases, meaning-change in an object is rooted not in a corporate plan but in the materials' own behavior. Objects are touched but also smelled and tasted (Zubrzycki 2013), which allows their symbolic significance to be absorbed invisibly and thus understood instinctively. Materials can be "docile and unruly" (Domínguez Rubio 2014), and they can tear and crumble and rot (McDonnell 2010).

How, then, can we reconcile the phenomenological and agentic properties of materials with the systematic and clinical treatment of artifacts through state procedures (including, but not limited to, the repatriation press conference)? When state officials in Italy consolidate artifacts into hauls of "recovered" objects, they limit the possibilities for individuals' phenomenological engagement with the objects. But they do not have absolute control over the materials themselves, and they acknowledge this fact when they speak about the artifacts' fragility or poor preservation state. The age of the materials, especially glass, metal, and ceramic fixtures (handles on Apulian wares, for example), sustains the discourse of heritage protection. The objective of the state is to halt the aging process of the materials while amplifying the endurance of the objects as symbols. In this way the materiality of the objects is not ignored but rather *managed*. The non-state actors who know about the objects only through newspaper or television coverage of the press conference are directed to think and feel about them in specific ways: as symbolically vital yet materially unstable, thus requiring expert intervention.

## **Disseminating repatriation conferences beyond the government office**

Repatriation press conferences take place in government buildings, out of the circuit of everyday spaces and practices for the majority of Italians. How, then, can we be sure that these press conferences are noticed and talked about by ordinary Italians, much less reacted to emotionally? In other words, how can we be sure that the repatriation conferences have an impact outside the narrow confines of heritage management and Art Squad audits?

Newspapers, news magazines, online heritage sites, and television programs (news as well as cultural shows) all provide information about repatriation press conferences. To take the example of newspapers, in Italy they are not sold in coin-operated boxes the way they are in the United States. Instead, one visits a newsstand. Newsstands sell magazines, children's activity books, maps, bus tickets, and phone cards in addition to newspapers, which means that all customers, regardless of whether they are interested in the news, will get a look (however briefly) at a newspaper. The major national newspapers tend to be folded once and stacked up on the central counter or behind the vendor. One copy of each is displayed unfolded, front page centered and facing out such that the main headlines are prominently visible as customers step up to the newsstand. At busy times, such as morning and evening rush hour and afternoon lunch breaks, the newsstand queues can be long. In these moments customers chat with each other, check their smartphones, and read the headlines.

The Italian newspaper system features a high number of regional papers in addition to the major national titles. But because of news media mergers and consolidations in the past 20 years, few of the titles have reliable autonomy (Forgacs 2001; Ricciardi 2012). This means that newspapers tend to run similar stories and editorials. At the newsstand, the "different" titles run by the same companies use the same (or very similar) photos and column content but with

different headlines. This has an amplifying effect on the news. I was in Rome in summer 2012, shortly after the Guardia di Finanza announced the successful completion of its top-secret *blitz*, “Operazione Valerio Massimo.”<sup>41</sup> It was a massive operation: nearly 18,000 cultural artifacts were recovered, “many of them considered to be of outstanding interest,” according to the official statement released in advance of the press conference. It was front-page news, and at the newsstands I saw several papers championing the episode and the *Finanzieri* who participated.

The structure of newspaper production and distribution is one crucial example of how repatriation press conferences are made visible in the public sphere. The example shows, too, the deliberate attempt on the part of the state to showcase a specific form of military victory: the restoration of cultural objects to the nation.

Repatriation press conferences are carefully organized to feature the same recurring set of images and materials: objects laid in rows and grouped by type; a complete absence of individual object labels; the prominent presentation of the Art Squad’s official seal and flag; and Art Squad agents in military uniforms, who preside over the recovered objects and sometimes hold them aloft wearing white gloves and stern expressions. This is the state’s ritual performance of repatriation. But what does this form of ritual *do*, sociologically? In *Language and Symbolic Power*, Bourdieu argued that rituals are

situations of *imposition* in which, through the exercise of a technical competence which may be very imperfect, a social competence is exercised – namely, that of the legitimate speaker, authorized to speak and to speak with authority. (Bourdieu 1991: 41)

In the repatriation press conference, the technical competence of Art Squad agents bolsters their claim to authority over the artifacts. The agents literally speak about theft and crime,

---

<sup>41</sup> The Guardia di Finanza’s press release is available here: [http://www.gdf.it/GdF/it/Stampa/Ultime\\_Notizie/Anno\\_2012/Maggio\\_2012/info988249689.html](http://www.gdf.it/GdF/it/Stampa/Ultime_Notizie/Anno_2012/Maggio_2012/info988249689.html).

organization and cooperation, and of monetary worth and the size of the haul. The objects speak metaphorically of cultural intactness, national pride, and history. One way to read repatriation press conferences, then, is as a choreographed assemblage of gestures, actors, and objects in which the state's cultural authority is reinforced through the act of speaking.

The aggregated antiquities, the “haul” of repatriation, contribute to the production of indexical history by offering an experience of the nation's past that is collected, collective, and vast. The real messiness of contemporary national culture – the overlapping and (sometimes) competing *patriae*, multi-culturalism, agnosticism, atheism, and divergent partisan views – is glossed by the simplicity of piled-up, “nationed” antiquities arranged in deceptively linear patterns (Duara 1996). Through repatriation press conferences, antiquities score symbolic victory points for the national community. Repatriated objects are assigned a point of cultural origin, the natal affinity that links people with materials.

No nation is built on *quantity* of glories. To create a symbolic order, to create family, it is necessary to have a few objects that are better than the rest. A nation needs icons. They may concretize glory and prestige, as with the Parthenon for the Greeks, the Waterloo battlefield for the British, and the bronze she-wolf for Italians. National icons can also convey suffering and defeat, as demonstrated by images of Catholic martyrdom in Polish national mythology (Zubrzycki 2013). The core function of the national icon is to concentrate collective memory and signal the national community's historical singularity. This is the tension in Giuseppe's office: contractually tasked with raking in quantities, he is affectively invested in an individual work of particular quality. The obsession with quantity flourishes in Italy, as in other modern nation states, however, precisely because quantitative goals (“X number of antiquities returned by 2015”) can be measured by a neat and tidy bureaucratic procedure (whether an annual review

with the department director, a year-end audit of expenditures and program impact, or regression analyses of unit performance over time). Quantification and bureaucracy shape national culture by calibrating it with specific, measurable outcomes.

### **Repatriation on display: The “*Il Patrimonio Ritrovato*” exhibition**

Whereas the MiBAC- or Art Squad-sponsored press conference is clearly situated in the realm of politics and governmentality, museums provide a seemingly apolitical, ideologically pristine environment for the presentation of repatriation cases. Museums are centers of cultural authority, affixing objects with meaning and legitimacy and encouraging civility and compliance among citizen-viewers (Duncan 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1992; Zolberg 1994). Repatriated artifacts have to go somewhere, of course, and museums appear to be the logical place, since selling artifacts to private collectors is illegal. But museums represent a regime of historical knowledge that rose to prominence relatively recently (late 19<sup>th</sup>/early 20<sup>th</sup> century) (Marchand 2006; Schnapp 1996). In the following chapter I will examine the role of museums in cultural power through the production of museum-based knowledge of antiquities. For now, I wish to stress that museum displays of repatriated objects are the outcome of political and legal decisions. Frequent, well-publicized museum exhibitions with such titles as “Art Held Hostage” and “Recovering our Culture” should remind us of the close institutional ties between the Art Squad and museum directors (who report to MiBAC and so inhabit a space of semi-autonomy; this is explained in Chapter Four).

In November 2012 I visited an exhibit at Rome’s Villa Giulia Museum entitled *I Predatori dell’Arte... Il Patrimonio Ritrovato* (“Predators of Art... and the Rediscovered Heritage”). The display featured artifacts recovered by Italian authorities from the illicit trading network of Giacomo Medici and Robert Hecht. Many items were found in the Geneva Freeport,

where they were awaiting exportation to private collectors and auction houses in Britain and the United States (Watson & Todeschini 2007). The Villa Giulia Museum's press release announced the exhibition as an opportunity for members of the public to familiarize themselves with the extraordinary work undertaken by the Swiss magistrate, the Art Squad, the Guardia di Finanza, and state archaeologists. Two themes dominated the exhibit: maligning *tombatori*, dealers, collectors, and unscrupulous foreign museums who harbor Italian antiquities without sound provenance (the "predatori"); and collective celebration for the state authorities who stood up to the predators and won back the nation's cultural treasures.

Italian-speaking visitors were recruited to support the Art Squad's mission at the entrance to the exhibition, where they told that the museums' directors knew that they (the visitors) could be counted upon as "important allies for the care and enrichment of the archaeological patrimony of the Etruscan world." The opening panel in the exhibition reminded Italian-speakers of their state's duty towards patrimony, reprinting in bright yellow script a passage from Article 9 of the Italian constitution: "The Republic promotes the development of culture and technical and scientific research, as well as care for the natural treasures and the historic and artistic patrimony of the nation," (my translation).<sup>42</sup> This text did not appear on the English-language panels, signaling a discursive difference that continued throughout the exhibit. Italian-language readers were encouraged to identify with the objects and institutions through the first person plural pronoun and frequent invocations of national pride. English readers were given a more detached and scholarly description of the objects and their recent mistreatment.

How far back do we go with cultural legitimacy? Which objects are included in *patria* ideology, and which are left out? And are such outcomes politically or culturally determined?

---

<sup>42</sup> The original text reads: "La Repubblica promuove lo sviluppo della cultura e la ricerca scientifica e tecnica, tutela il paesaggio e il patrimonio storico e artistico della Nazione."



Answering these questions helps us to identify the parameters of national culture as set by state actors. The recovered objects, mostly Etruscan and Greek in origin, were narrated as members of the family. Their recovery from foreign museums was a homecoming: they had been on a long and “involuntary” *giro del mondo* (world tour), which ended, “fortunately, where it was begun.” A bronze figurine of Heracles had “returned to his home in Italy, where he belongs” (*è tornato a casa in Italia, da dove proviene*). These objects were narrativized as having been victimized by the protagonists of the black market in antiquities, but above all by foreign museums. In four separate panels, foreign institutions’ transgressions were laid bare:

Many museums were involved, from the largest and best-known museums of Europe and America to small university museums.

As examples, the information panel named only American offenders: the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Princeton’s University Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the John Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. In a sentiment that would be repeated three times in the one-room exhibit, readers were told that the corrupt American institutions had the tactical advantage in the illicit antiquities trade because “the American museums [...] enjoy significant economic resources.” These resources allowed the museums to purchase Italian antiquities illicitly, for decades, with impunity.

In the face of the American museums’ outsized financial capital, Italian institutions were presented as taking the moral high ground. A series of iPad-sized screens was installed throughout the exhibition, showing film clips and still photos from the *missione* to recover the lost artifacts. In a sequence of photos, Art Squad agents were shown in dress uniform inspecting vandalized sites. Sometimes they were shown alongside plainclothes Finanziere (agents of the Guardia di Finanza) or archaeologists in white lab coats. Other photos presented Art Squad

agents at press conferences with recovered items on the tables in front of them. The accompanying text made clear what it was they were up against. Although looting and heritage crimes occur throughout the world, “it is our country that is most exposed to the raid (*razzia*) on cultural patrimony.” The determination and moral investment of the Italian authorities was what accounted for the safe return of the purloined antiquities, overcoming foreign economic power and looters’ depravities.

Two important themes can be distilled from the forgoing description of the *Predatori dell’Arte* exhibition. The first is that the recovery of art objects or *rimpatrio* was presented as a situation involving powerful foreign (above all, American) institutions in conflict with Italians and the state’s art squad. The emphasis on conflict, foreigners’ greed and the artworks’ suffering allowed the Italian state to emerge as the righteous savoir of the artworks. In this reading, the state agents involved in the repatriation operations play the part of a culturally correct David in the face of the American museums’ culturally impure, bullying Goliath. There is an unobvious subtext to this theme: non-Italian museums are so desperate to compensate for their own poor material culture that they are willing to stoop as low as contravening international law and knowingly depriving a people (Italians) of their rightful heritage.

Second, the *Predatori dell’Arte* exhibition stressed the family nature of the national culture. The Heracles figure was not simply returned to Italian soil or to a Roman museum; it was returned to its rightful “home”, whence it originated. A collection of terracotta pots was said to have had its “homecoming” at last. And two female bronze figurines were sisters “lost” to their *nazione* in Italy and relieved to be “home.” The objects, then, were animated with human characteristics by being given family roles and a footing in the Italian national community. A single line explained how Greek objects become Italian:

Ancient Romans were in constant contact with Greek artisans, and countless works of art were brought to the Italian soil where they were integrated into local communities – some of which developed their own manufactures for Greek-style objects.

That sentence vastly simplifies what is in fact a complicated and unsettled process.

Archaeologists often struggle to fix an object's provenance with certainty, and there is great disagreement among them whether place of manufacture or place of use should be weighted more heavily in determining provenance. In the *Predatori dell'Arte* exhibit, the Italianness of ancient Greek objects was taken as an objective truth.

Italy is not the only nation-state to describe its antiquities as members of the national family. In the dispute between Greece and Great Britain over ownership of the Parthenon Marbles, Greek officials frequently invoke familist rhetoric to argue for the statues' return. The dispute centers on a set of carved marble figures from the *cella* frieze and pediments of the Temple to Athena Parthenos on the Acropolis in Athens. The figures have been in London for two centuries but there have been loud calls for their return to Athens since at least the time of Greece's independence in 1832 (Rose-Greenland 2013). In 2009 the Greek government opened a new Parthenon Museum in Athens to showcase archaeological finds from Acropolis excavations, including (officials hoped) the London-based sculptures. But the British government refused to budge on the issue. On the occasion of the opening of the museum Greece's culture minister, Antonis Samaras, likened the monument to a family portrait with "loved ones missing." A caryatid (female statue) that was removed from the Acropolis and shipped to Britain in the early 1800s has long been said to be a "lost sister" to the remaining sculptural pieces. In the grammar of cultural repatriation, antiquities serve to locate the family firmly in nation-state ideology.

Social theorizing aside, the Art Squad is still a government agency in a modern state bureaucracy. Its staff members have a job to do. In the face of endless forms, uniform

cataloguing procedures, and quantitative work goals, what happens to affective investment? Do Art Squad agents themselves navigate a struggle between the impersonal rules of bureaucracy and the tug of *patria* sentiment? I began thinking about these questions as I theorized indexical history. On the one hand, repatriation stresses national repopulation. The discourse of family is unmistakable. On the other, the national population – now comprising flesh-and-blood Italians as well as stone and terracotta compatriots – is enormous. The accumulation of recovered goods draws observers’ attention to quantity, at the expense of individual qualities. What can we learn from Art Squad agents, who sit at the nerve center of cultural power?

### **Inside the Art Squad: Retaining objects’ charisma within bureaucracy**

In the first section of this chapter I focused on macro-level issues surrounding the formation of the Art Squad. In the second section I took the discussion down to a closer level of focus by examining particular practices of the art squad, including rhetorical and ritual devices. In the final section I will further tighten the analytical frame. Using interview data from my fieldwork with the Art Squad office in Rome, here I home in on issues of identity, institutional loyalty and cultural citizenship among the art squad employees.

Art Squad agents are normally drawn from the ranks of the Carabinieri. Attaining an Art Squad post is seen as highly desirable – a “step up,” as one of my interview subjects explained. It is a desirable posting in part because the Art Squad’s mission is more successfully articulated and communicated than other branches of the Carabinieri. But it is desirable, too, because Art Squad agents are publicly celebrated as superior to ordinary police agents. In the initial application phase for a post with the Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale, applicants must demonstrate their familiarity with institutional procedures. This includes knowing the organizational structure of the Carabinieri and MiBAC, an arrangement that links military with

civil bureaucracies. Applicants must also indicate some interest in archaeology, art history, and geology. Each of these topics is then covered in coursework as part of the trainee art squad agents' *formazione* (training period).

In courses at the Università degli Studi Roma Tre and in the state-issued manuals, prospective Art Squad agents are drilled in the finer points of bureaucratic jurisdiction, correct paperwork procedures, and hierarchical distinctions. This last area is especially important in the Art Squad, which uses military titles rather than academic honorifics to rank the significance of its members. Titles remind Art Squad agents of their place in the pecking order, and correlates with how much paperwork each must tackle on any particular work day.

The centerpiece of the state's cultural census is its Leonardo Data Bank (*Banca Dati Leonardo*). The name itself belies the state's intense investment in linking modern Italy with its glorious history. The Art Squad web site describes the Leonardo Data Bank as an "instrument for cataloging art taken illicitly," and that is exactly what it does. One of the earliest efforts to use computer technology to trace stolen works of art, it is used internationally by scholars and police forces trying to track cultural objects. The data bank is organized into an information tree that begins with the general category of object (sculpture, textile, vase, coin). The categories are then broken down into material, design, color, and findspot. Field officers are issued portable devices that allow them to interact with the data bank remotely, at any time. One of the most popular stories among Art Squad agents is of one of their colleagues on vacation in New York City, passing the window of an antiques dealer and noticing a red-figure Etruscan vase for sale. He had his state-issued digital phone to hand and, with a quick photo and a few keystrokes, was able to determine that the vase was listed as stolen in the data bank. Whether the agent finished his

vacation is beside point. The popularity of the story demonstrates Art Squad agents' tireless devotion to hunting down misappropriated works of Italian art.

Each society, Michel Foucault argued, has its regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth in which certain types of discourse and symbolic language are accepted and made to function as true (Foucault 1980: 131). In its quest to enlist "good" Italians as stewards of the nation's *beni*, the Art Squad sustains a general politics of cultural truth whereby citizens are categorized not just as licit or illicit users of culture but as family members or outsiders. In this imagined nuclear family, state officials including Art Squad agents take the avuncular role of powerful protectors. The possibility of extended family, for example through Italian ex-pats and Italian antiquities legally owned by foreign institutions, is left vague. But the imperative to protect heritage is never vague. Through newspapers, youth programs, and government publicity materials, Italians are told that antiquities and monuments are constituent elements of the national community.

How do Art Squad agents think about the objects that they are sworn to protect. Do they maintain passionate engagement with the objects despite the constant grind of paperwork and bureaucratic routines? This question emerged forcefully in my interview with Giuseppe, who has been part of the Art Squad for over 20 years. His office in the Art Squad's headquarters in the Piazza Sant'Ignazio had the inescapable feeling of officialdom: there were stacks of white papers, old telephone books, pens, envelopes, unread mail, filing cabinets, and framed certificates on the wall. Giuseppe<sup>43</sup> told me,

I do this work because I love art. I have a passion for it. Why else would I be doing it? I sit at this desk, and I do paperwork and Power Points... I'm not part of the action any more [blitzes]. I don't know, I think I will retire

---

<sup>43</sup> To protect the identity of my informants, I refer to them pseudonymically unless otherwise indicated.

next year. The men upstairs [bosses], you know, they are sneaky (*furbo*). Everyone is cheating, everyone is concerned with climbing [the hierarchy]. I should take retirement, because my blood pressure isn't good for this -- I care too much about the art. But we must continue the work... the work is important [...] It's important for Italy.

My two-hour discussion with Giuseppe focused on his love of art, but also on organizational frustrations and corruption among his superiors. His words point to a central challenge for the state: how can it bring cultural treasures into the ambit of bureaucracy without detracting from the treasures' charisma? When cultural objects are routinely channeled through the legal system, how do they avoid routinization? The continued relevance of culture to public life depends in part on the Italian state's ability to maintain excitement and public interest in the *beni*. One way this happens is by intensifying affective ties to the art objects. Giuseppe, for example, spoke of cultural goods as an aggregated good but he also drew my attention to the extraordinary qualities of individual works. As we sat in his office he pointed to a high-quality reproduction of a Madonna and Child icon that the Art Squad had recovered a few years ago. He encouraged me to gaze carefully at it and said,

This icon, it's from Liguria. It is the only known example to us of an icon in this style from such an early period. I'm from Liguria, [so] it's my *patria*, you see. That's why it's a very special piece to me. For us [Ligurians] the Virgin and Son are sacred, and this one [icon] shows them as very loving and close – it's like a family portrait, you see. She [Mary] is just like any mamma from Liguria nursing her baby. [...] I want to look at it every day on my wall. It motivates me to keep working, to keep fighting. The thieves who stole it... [he shook his head] they have no idea what they were doing! If they had destroyed this we could have lost one of the world's most beautiful paintings. It would have been scandalous.

Tacked up around the Ligurian Madonna and Child were a postcard of Cecilia Bartoli, a photo of a Christian-era silver drinking cup, and a black and white photo of Maria Montessori. These were important images to Giuseppe, situated in the workaday trappings of an otherwise mundane

government office. Workers everywhere personalize their workspace with trinkets and pictures. Why was Giuseppe's office any different? The central display of a religious icon – and Giuseppe's engagement with it – made visible the sacred canopy within the office (Berger 1967; Bellah 1991 [1970]). The sacred canopy needs to be understood next to Berger's theory of the symbolic universe, which he defined as a body of "theoretical tradition that integrate[s] different provinces of meaning and encompass[es] the institutional order in a symbolic totality" (Berger & Luckmann 1966: 5). Religion is one type of symbolic universe. It establishes an "all-embracing social order" that provides stability and meaning in a world of incoherent symbol systems and unpredictable change. Berger argues for thinking about religion as dialectic between the sacred (unknowable and mysterious) and the everyday (known and more or less comprehended). Our everyday experiences and practices are an important source of meaning in our lives. In Giuseppe's case, his "everyday" was the Art Squad, itself a pillar of the sacred state.

The Ligurian Madonna and Child thus served as a double icon: an image sacred to Catholicism (the most widely followed religion in Italy, though no longer technically the state's *official* religion), and an image sacred to the mission of the Art Squad for what it represented of that office's effectiveness. The dual sacralities complemented and reinforced each other. Maria Montessori, the beloved founder of a popular ecumenical pedagogy, was put in dialectical relation with the Ligurian icon and became a modern iconic figure of virginal motherhood. These images together constituted the sacred canopy, under which Giuseppe created his own sacred traditions in the heart of the secular state. The material and symbolic dynamics of Giuseppe's office speak to Balibar's assertion that "states cannot be *nation-states* if they do not appropriate the sacred, not only at the level of representations of amore or less secularized "sovereignty," but also at the day-to-day level of legitimation" (Balibar 2003: 20; emphasis in the original).



Balibar's interest was in the state's "withdrawing" the legitimation of marriages, births, and deaths from clans, tribes, and other pre-modern communities and taking over those spheres of social control. In the case of repatriation and cultural power, the state removes meaning-making of artifacts and monuments from local, non-scientific cultural contexts and becomes, in the guise of heritage management, the central point around which cultural objects' meaning gravitates.

The irony of repatriation is that, for all its talk of family and fatherland, it cannot actually enhance the bonds of *patria*. This is because repatriation cases target objects on the basis of legal strengths and weaknesses: which institutions have capitulated in the past, which court jurisdictions have ruled favorably on Italian claims, and how strong are objects' provenance information. Repatriation cases are not, then, designed to go after the things really worth getting, in the sense of organic cultural resonance (if the objects of long-dead people can even be said to have "resonance" with contemporary people – a point I will explore in Chapter Five). Meanwhile, the things that *are* worth having — Pompeii, for example — decay irreversibly, even though they are actual sources of power, the cultural stuff that binds a people together.

**“Every single scrap is ours”: or, How much cultural materiality does the *patria* need?**

In the first chapter I identified a master cultural narrative that obtains in modern Italy. This narrative asserts that Italy is the richest and most important in the world when it comes to historical materiality. Given this wealth one might expect that the state is willing to release some of it through sales to foreign museums or long-term loans. This presupposition is a flash point among cultural administrators in Rome. In the course of my fieldwork I heard frequently from museum staff that the storage facilities in their institutions were filled to bursting with objects and that the museum personnel lacked adequate resources to study, conserve, and display their inventory. One museum-based archaeologist, whom I interviewed in Rome, requested that I not

use her real name because she feared professional reprisals for criticizing the repatriation work of MiBAC and the Art Squad. I will refer to her as Milena. Milena is a 34-year-old native of Italy who completed her primary university training in Pisa. Finding no archaeology jobs in Italy after graduating, Milena moved to Germany and then Switzerland, where she did museum-based conservation and published articles on the Italian dig sites where she attempted to remain active (an uphill battle owing to the culture of professional archaeology in Italy, which I will explain in further detail in the next chapter).

Milena and I met on the terrace café next to the Galleria Nazionale d'Arte Moderna in July 2013. She heard about my research project through a mutual friend, and when she introduced herself to me through a Facebook message she told me that she thought I should hear from a “true Italian archaeologist” for an alternative view of repatriation. Foreigners and outsiders to the museum system were, she felt, too easily impressed by the moral simplicity of repatriation as presented by MiBAC and Art Squad officials. Shortly before our meeting I visited an exhibition at the Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome. The exhibition showcased recently recovered artifacts and celebrated the Art Squad's repatriation successes. I mentioned the exhibition to Milena and she smiled and shook her head. She said,

What is frustrating to me, and I think this is something that many, many archaeologists here cannot accept, is the constant push to recover artifacts when, in fact, we desperately need money to conserve and preserve. Foreigners think that Pompeii [which is experiencing irreversible and widespread deterioration] is the worst of it. I can show you ten Pompeiis right here in the city of Rome. [With repatriation], OK, you say you want to take back the Morgantina Aphrodite or the Euphronios *krater*. I understand why. Such cases, they generate a lot of interest and hopefully send a message that foreign museums must stop purchasing antiquities that have a questionable provenance. But look more closely and you see that much of the recovered items, they are – what? Not so significant. I mean, perhaps significant to a specialist but not to the public, not to the curators, and they won't be included in exhibits or catalogues. It might be better to move our

attention from repatriation to patrimony (*dal rimpatrio al patrimonio*). I mean to say, patrimony as taking good care of what we already have.

For Milena, *rimpatrio* actually works against *patrimonio* by siphoning off resources that would otherwise go to preserving objects and monuments that are languishing in Italian museums' basements or are otherwise insufficiently protected out in the open. "This is something that won't ever get me a job with MiBAC but who cares? I think that if we really care about artifacts, then sometimes the best thing is to leave them [where they are]. Again, I don't mean the masterpieces that the Met and the Getty flout at us. I mean the little things – the coins, ceramics, miniature sculptures, that we already have so many of. Let them remain where they are presumably cared for better than we can [care for them]."

Milena's position was predicated on a distinction between masterpieces (her phrase in Italian was *i pezzi più preziosi*) and "the little things" (*le cose insignificante*). Her take on antiquities was informed by her professional interest in artifacts as scientific objects, for study and conservation. She stressed her commitment to caring for the artifacts already unearthed and held in public collections in Italy.

Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Colasanti, Commander of the Art Squad headquarters in Rome, sharply disagreed with Milena's view when I presented a brief version of it to him in his office. I interviewed Lt. Col. Colasanti in November 2012. I had petitioned for this interview for three months and was left uncertain of its likelihood until the morning it happened. Colasanti and his assistants presented him to me as a busy and important man. I was ushered into his office by two assistants and asked politely to sit facing Colasanti's monumental desk. Flanking the desk were the Italian and the Art Squad flags. Framed certificates attested to Colasanti's long and successful career in the Carabinieri. A printout of my University of Michigan Department of Sociology graduate student profile page sat on his desk.

During our discussion, Colasanti punctuated his Italian with decisive hand gestures and dramatic pauses, telling me exactly what the mission of the Art Squad is. “The Italian state owns everything [of cultural importance]. It is prohibited to sell anything. Nothing goes to foreign museums or private collections anymore.” Why, I asked him, is it important to track everything? I shared a picture on my iPad, showing a recent Art Squad press conference that featured a long table covered with potsherds and tiny bronze coins – tens of thousands of which sit in the storage closets of museums across the country. Surely these little things could be given away or sold without deleterious impact on the national culture? “Every single scrap is Italy’s,” he replied. “The job of the Art Squad is to make sure that the state controls what it owns. We do this for the Italian people.”

What does this uncompromising totality say about the state’s control of material culture? It says that the state is the only credible store of expertise and moral instruction when it comes to national art. If the state allows for a “scrap” to fall through the cracks of law enforcement or private collecting, it cedes control of culture to rival cultural actors (whether foreign museums, private collectors, or home-grown tomb robbers). The possibility that those actors may use the nation’s cultural objects in ways that threaten the state’s privileged position is what MiBAC and the Art Squad guard against. Colasanti’s insistence on total control contradicts Milena’s point that selectivity is necessary to protect objects already in Italy. Colasanti’s structural mission is totalizing control over antiquities, nominally in the interest of the Italian people (*il popolo Italiano*). Two salary grades above Giuseppe, Colasanti cut out the lyricism of sacrality and identity and got to the heart of the matter from the government’s point of view: For there to be any point to repatriation, the net that it casts must be broad and without holes. The pride of the

national community rests in winning back antiquities, lots of them, and witnessing the world's greatest cultural power add up.

### **Discussion and Implications**

With this chapter we have moved beyond traditional scholarly questions about repatriation such as, *Which countries are involved?* and *What is at stake?* I have pushed for an examination of issues of social ontology and cultural impact. *Why* is repatriation a significant area of state activity in Italy? *To what end* are objects piled up in “wins” and stockpiled as evidence of Italian cultural power? Repatriation matters for many reasons: it effects international cultural diplomacy and market demand for antiquities, it tests the reach of national and transnational cultural laws, and it reinserts long-missing objects back into the national community. These are important effects. My focus has been on the cultural logic of *patria* as an explanation for the intrinsic importance of repatriation. In the current system of institutional practices, cultural power is indexed according to the number of objects brought back. This regime of calibrating meaning effaces the qualitative features of individual objects, with strategic allowance for big wins that briefly grab newspaper headlines and plum positions in museum exhibitions.

The real cultural work that repatriation does is in fact simply the *act of* repatriation: the heroics of the blitz, and the glorified battle of good and evil, sacred and profane, Italian and foreigner. It matters that the state chooses to repatriate – that it very visible mobilizes people, equipment, and money to go after cultural objects. How the state chooses to do this matters, too. Military-police power is not an obvious (or available) choice for every nation-state. The titles, uniforms, and discourse of the Art Squad make clear the ontology of cultural power in Italy. Furthermore, repatriation does not end with mere control over the object. Repatriation is both act and process. It produces images, experiences, and ideas that extend temporally and thematically

into the public sphere. The ritual homecoming is celebrated with *stories* of heroic blitzes and a specific type of *display* of cultural goods. Repatriation generates *photos* that are reproduced in *print* and *online media*, disseminating the stories across the public sphere and into the future (through persistent web links and archive).

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with the Art Squad. The key theoretical point is that their operation is predicated on a fundamental misunderstanding of how *patria* is knitted together. Giuseppe's office wall, with its salon hang-style installation of a sacred icon, Cecilia Bartoli, and Maria Montessori, is actually a better representation of what binds Italy together than tablesful of indistinguishable coins at the repatriation press conference. The Madonna, La Gioiosa (Bartoli's moniker), and Mammolina ("Little Mother," Montessori's nickname) are the "best things", not the most things. The tension here is between the indexical idea that "Italy has produced the MOST opera singers" and the iconic idea that "Italy has produced Cecilia Bartoli." Only the latter generates *patria*, or affective investment in the nation's cultural materiality.

In Italy, Art Squad agents are lionized for their blitzes, and their unit is widely considered the pride of Italy's entire law enforcement apparatus. But just what is "enforced" by the Art Squad? National culture's fluidity makes it a moving target. This portends a parlous political situation for state officials, whose power rests on the semblance of permanence and credibility of the nation-state. For this reason it is important to have a stock of objects with staying power. Their collective significance is "always, already" understood (Althusser 1971: 175). Staying power itself is an outcome of the *content* of the images (or texts or spaces) and the *coercion* of the state. Repatriation is a particular form of cultural power that draws its legitimacy from law enforcement, quantitative expertise, and the invocation of family sentiment. Narrating repatriated

antiquities as members of the Italian family continues the ancient ideology of *patria* through the socio-political challenges of the modern secular nation-state.

To be sure, I am not accusing a cold and distant state of a widespread, Machiavellian manipulation of antiquities. A nation's touchstone images and monuments are rooted in the reality of popular feeling, earn adulation because of their formal qualities and linkages with other significant cultural practices. Images that "work" for the national imagination may well have centuries' worth of affective investment behind them. This is the story of iconic history as Schnapp (1997) tells it: people love and protect pieces through the centuries even if they no longer remember what the pieces originally stood for or how they were meant to be used.

The practical fact remains that for a much-loved piece to make the leap from folk object to national culture, it must be categorized as such. State actors and those with the imprimatur of state support are heavily involved in the work because they have the requisite social and economic capital. Some objects are discarded while others are retained: there is discretion involved, and decisions to be made about what and how to preserve cultural goods (Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996). Not everybody has the power to make and enforce such decisions. The people's patrimony is not a democratic product, nor is it history. Although ancient works of art and monuments enrich our study of history, they do not comprise a neutral or self-evident data set that can give us a full account of what happened in the past. Repatriation-won patrimony tells us as much or more about present-day values and interests as about the past.

The study of repatriation has further implications for how we understand the constitution of national culture. There is scholarly consensus that national culture or patrimony comes into being through key state mechanisms including rhetoric and the privileging of certain objects, symbols, and spaces. The state's symbolic power matters. But so, too, does the state's day-to-day

management of culture. For every marquee *krater* that is returned to Italy in a hero's welcome there are dozens of objects that barely register in the public consciousness. They may feature in an Art Squad press conference but they are relied upon for their quantity rather than their quality. Most repatriated antiquities are not celebrities. They may well live out their life cycle in a storage box in the basement of a state office. Their major work takes place during repatriation and the ritual of reunion with the imagined national family. After performing in the repatriation process, antiquities' function is to be recorded, catalogued, and stored – the stockpiling of cultural power.

Returning to a theme established in the first chapter, the repatriation of ancient artifacts highlights the “liquidity” of antiquities as a powerful source of cohesion. It is the apparent solidity of antiquity that makes it a promising basis for a nation's cultural identity. The duration and continuity of some aspects of Roman culture bode well for a nation-state interested in advertising its own long destiny. But “antiquity” is a contemporary construct (Goody 2011). Contemporary actors set its parameters, select from it certain components to highlight, and decide when it ends. This is the plasticity of antiquity. It is a historical idea at once familiar and foreign, requiring handling and interpretation by experts and government officials. Selectivity varies according to regimes of power but also according to perceptions of cultural connectivity.

This chapter has focused on the Art Squad's role in repatriating antiquities. State-employed archaeologists and museum staff are also part of the process, but they occupy a liminal position. Archaeologists and museum staff are structurally obliged to support the state's grammar and practice of repatriation. But archaeologists also interact with non-state, local actors, and they operate with intellectual commitments that do not always fit neatly with state priorities.



As we will see in the next chapter, it is within the liminal space occupied by archaeologists that tensions between the iconic and the indexical, the mythical and the rational, and the national and the local get worked out and re-shaped.

## CHAPTER 4

### **The Consolidation of Expertise: Knowing the Nation through Antiquities**

Omnes omnium caritates patria una complectitur.  
(Our country [patria] alone explains our affections for all others.)

- Cicero, *Officiis* 57

*Patria* is more than a geographical space. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, *patria* is an emotional reference point, its invocation a rallying cry for collective identity and, as Cicero tells us, affection for one's countrymen. As Benedict Anderson stressed, the fraternity alluded to by Cicero – the “deep, horizontal comradeship” of the nation, in Anderson's words – is what makes it possible for “so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die” for the imagined national community (Anderson 1991: 7). Fraternity, in Anderson's and Cicero's thinking, resides primarily in people. But people *do* die, and in fact entire peoples die off as cities collapse and empires unravel, and yet the objects that they used and created carry fraternal currency that is still valuable today. When cultural officials and scholars narrate antiquities as members of the family, they use objects to provide tactile links between people and *patria*.

This chapter will explore the early history of the Italian state's efforts to build precisely this relationship between people and objects, and will then theorize the principal mechanisms through which the Italian public is encouraged to accept this relationship in the present day. With this contribution, I explain how cultural objects become a part of the fraternity or *patria* for which people are prepared to live and die.

Today we take it for granted that the *patria* and its cultural objects should come under the organizational and intellectual domain of archaeology, a specific scientific field whose categories, instruments, and methods seem best suited to protecting and making sense of cultural patrimony. But the obviousness of the arrangement merits critical inquiry both because this state of affairs represents a relatively recent development and because the practices and institutions of archaeology are fundamental to the workings of cultural power. As a science, archaeology is protected from the accusations of bias and politicking that dog government offices and ministries, and so is a potent vehicle for promoting and validating the narratives and object classifications that dovetail with the national government's interests in a strong, centralized body of material culture.<sup>44</sup>

The core question addressed by this chapter is basic: How has it come to pass that digging up pots made by long-dead people who spoke long-dead languages, became the mechanism for bolstering national identity? To put it bluntly, someone long ago lost a ceramic wine-mixing bowl. It fell, intact or in bits, to the ground. Two thousand years later it is dug up, cleaned, labeled, and displayed in a museum, whereupon school children (among others) are made to look at it because it is “good” for them – good, in other words, for their historical education as well as their sense of connection with national culture. How and why does all of that socio-historical significance, that national-cultural capital, attach itself to the object?

---

<sup>44</sup> To be sure, archaeological departments, ministries, and staffers are criticized for structural and procedural shortcomings. But in such cases, what is criticized is not the ontology of archaeology but the institutional arrangements of archaeology. This distinction is explored subtly by Matthew Edgeworth (2003), whose study of field archaeologists in Britain examines the ways in which hunches, blunders, and judgment calls are baked into the excavation and classification processes, yet archaeologists and outsiders alike see institutional issues (funding, hiring, publishing processes) but not everyday scientific practices as sources of biased research programs and preferential treatment to certain theories and historical periods.

To answer this question, we need to move beyond the usual scholarly approaches to the relationship between archaeology and nationhood. As I discussed in Chapter One, this literature is traditionally oriented around the view that archaeology is particularly vulnerable to ideological manipulation for ontological and structural reasons, with disastrous results in times of dictatorship and political unrest (Díaz-Andreu & Champion 1996; Fawcett & Kohl 1995). While archaeologists, archaeological institutions, and artifact findings have all undoubtedly been used as props for political agendas at various historical moments, the heuristic model of domination and exploitation does not adequately explain all possible relationship modes between professional archaeology and state institutions. Archaeologists “read” nationhood onto artifacts because they are “nationed” just like any other individual is, and not necessarily because they support a sinister ideological agenda (Rose-Greenland 2013b).

What is required, instead, is a conceptual framework that specifies the spaces, institutions, actors, materials, and objects that constitute Italian archaeology today, and which can be used as the basis of a theory of the relationship between the state and archaeology. To this end, I begin the chapter by examining the role of key figures in determining the contours of this relationship, especially Paolo Orsi, a pioneering archaeologist who defied powerful foreign institutions to protect Italian archaeological sites for Italian scholars and the Italian public. As we shall see, the events surrounding Orsi and other influential figures of his period constitute a struggle to define the proper role and place of archaeology in relation to the Italian state, a fight between archaeologists and private collectors over the investment of total ownership of antiquities in the state. This was as much a fight about philosophies of property as it was a struggle over epistemology and power.

In the second section I turn to museums and the particular experiences of history that they offer. By the third quarter of the 19th century, publicly funded museums rose to prominence as institutions of guardianship over cultural treasures. In the early 20th century, public museums were seen as good not just for objects but for people, too. Because museums were civilizing spaces in which common people could learn something and hopefully improve themselves (Duncan 1995; Hooper-Greenhill 1992), museums had a privileged claim to being able to discharge the legally protected idea of *godimento pubblico* or “public enjoyment” of cultural goods.

The irony of museum-based public enjoyment, I argue, is that when cultural objects enter the sphere of museums they are classified, procedurally purified, and locked into a system of displays and storage facilities that distances the objects from the public. The objects, in short, become specimens rather than instruments of cultural expression in daily life. So while members of the public are told that they are rightful heirs to a glorious cultural legacy, they are not actually allowed to do anything with the material objects of that legacy, apart from viewing them inside the controlled environment of museums (Colla 2008). Well into the 19th century, Italians regularly encountered Etruscan, Greek, and Roman artifacts in private homes, churches, and civic buildings, where they might touch and hold and use the objects. With the passage of the 1909 antiquities nationalization law, the people’s patrimony was vested in the state and the haptic experience of antiquity was diminished in favor of the museum’s sanitized presentation of the nation’s cultural history. This distinction can be productively theorized as iconic versus indexical narratives. Indexical history, I explained in the first chapter, is a byproduct of modern cultural power that quantifies material culture, emphasizing vastness and vulnerability simultaneously. This leaves the state as the logical organizing apparatus for material culture.

The final part of this chapter analyzes specific recent exhibitions to identify museums' relationship to cultural power. In this portion of the discussion I examine the intersection of knowledge types in museum didacticism and pay especially close attention to the involvement of the Art Squad in shaping the narrative of national culture. These case studies make concrete the theory of how museums are used to foster a specific relationship between people and objects in contemporary Italy, one which makes those objects part of a *patria* worth defending.

### **The complexities of cultural expertise in 19<sup>th</sup> century Italy**

The story of the creation and growth of the field of archaeology has been told elsewhere (Ceserani 2012; Marchand 1996; Trigger 2006). From this literature, we know that the closing decades of the 19th century were a crucial period for the establishment of new excavation methods, classification systems, and professional institutions including foreign academies and fieldwork associations. But to explain why the objects of long-dead peoples resonate with modern nationhood, and find their intellectual and experiential home in the modern science of archaeology, we need to move beyond histories of the profession. We need to focus, instead, on the individuals (some, but not all, of them “archaeologists” as such) who worked to attach nationhood significance to antiquities. Three individuals in particular drive my discussion: Augusto Castellani, a wealthy and influential (mid- to late-) 19th-century jeweler and antiquities collector; Paolo Orsi, a pioneering archaeologist of the late-19th and early 20th century (whose contributions take up the majority of this discussion); and Andrea Carandini, the former archaeological advisor to the Prime Minister of Italy who is equal parts scholar and celebrity, sage and seer. These men did not set out to create a national archaeology. They brought (and, in Carandini's case, still bring) different ideologies and priorities to the study of antiquities. What

links them is the Italian soil, the natural home for the ancient objects and ruins, and the cohesive fabric for the discourse of cultural power.

### 'The Just Desires of the Scientific World': Creating a National Archaeology in Italy

Archaeology's domination of the study and interpretation of artifacts is a relatively new development. Antiquarians, artists, geologists, priests, monks, historians, and politicians have all, historically, offered theories of what antiquities were, how they should be treated and organized, and what they symbolized (Schnapp 1997; Trigger 2006). To this day, of course, antiquities are read and understood differently by different people. As recently as the Risorgimento, professional archaeology was not yet the dominant voice of "knowing" antiquities (Ridley 2009). This was a problem for those who were forming the embryonic view that antiquities held a special place at the core of Italian nationhood because without epistemological dominance, the profession could not achieve administrative dominance. And without administrative dominance, the comprehensive intactness of ancient objects and sites – the mainstay of epistemological dominance – was impossible.

In Chapter Two I identified an important point of dispute in national discussions about art policy: ownership. All sides agreed that guardianship, or *la tutela*, was a fine objective. But local guardianship laws did not make provision for enforcement, nor did they address the widespread problem of wealthy, private collectors giving away the antiquities that were rightfully theirs. In the 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, when ancient monuments were found in the soil on private land, the landowner was technically obligated to preserve and protect it for the sake of local heritage (Troilo 2011). It was an open secret, however, that wealthy landowners did as they wished. Etruscan and Roman artifacts were prized by collectors throughout Europe, and what many landowners saw in antiquities was a ready-made form of social capital. In the field of antiquities

knowledge, acculturation was the coin of the realm: money, pedigree, and land holdings correlated with a private citizen's authority over antiquities and thus his or her ability to export them. Until the late 19<sup>th</sup> century archaeologists were simply unable to stop private collectors from giving away Italian antiquities by the boatful.

In the mid-1880s, Paolo Orsi was a young inspector of archaeological works for the region of Calabria when he took administrative action that earned him fame in Italy and notoriety abroad (Paoletti 2005). Orsi got word that a team of American archaeologists was conducting trench excavations at a site near Croton, on Calabria's easternmost coastal stretch. Croton (modern Crotona) was founded as a Greek colony in the 8th century BC and rose to become one of Magna Graecia's most important cities (Spadea 1996). Croton and its environs had not yet been methodically excavated, and it was a plum site for rival archaeology teams. As summed up by Arthur Frothingham Jr., an archaeologist and professor of art history at Princeton, "The chance discoveries in the past, on these sites, of works of great archaeological and artistic value, attest the existence of an immense mine of antiquities of the best Greek periods. [Digging in Magna Graecia] would in all probability yield a large number of Greek bronzes, terra-cottas, coins, painted vases, and perhaps works of greater size and importance, -- a good foundation for a museum."<sup>45</sup> Joseph Thacher Clarke was not about to pass up the opportunity.

Clarke worked for the Kodak photographic company as its European representative. He amassed a fortune and developed an interest in travel and history. He had already cut his excavation teeth at the ancient Greek city of Assos (modern Turkey), and his success there made him an attractive candidate to lead a new expedition to Magna Graecia. At their annual meeting in Boston in May 1885, the Council of the American Institute of Archaeology voted to put him in

---

<sup>45</sup> Frothingham, Jr., A.L. 1886. "Note. An American Expedition to Magna Graecia," *American Journal of Archaeology* 2 (2): 179.



charge. Much was riding on Clarke's continued success: "[Consider] the unique importance of the undertaking, and the credit that it will bring to our country, as well as the works of art that it will add to our Museums."<sup>46</sup> The "our" was the United States, with foreign (Greek, by way of Italy) objects poised to add luster to the nation's cultural and scientific profile. When Clarke and his colleagues turned up in Calabria, they paid a local landowner for his personal permission to dig on the land near Croton. In doing so, they followed established archaeological practice, which held that permits were a matter of local negotiation and (often informal) administration.

Orsi saw things differently. He asserted the authority of the national government, exercised through the archaeological superintendents, over excavation permits. Clarke's agreement with the landowner was invalid in Orsi's eyes: Clarke was operating "senza regolare licenza" (without a regular operating license),<sup>47</sup> rendering Clarke's excavation project illicit. Clarke and his team dug at the sanctuary of Hera Lacinia near Croton in December 1887 and January 1888, at which point Orsi forced them to end their work. The Americans protested. Fromingham, who worked on the excavation team, wrote:

It is a general feeling that the laws regulating archaeological investigations and excavations in Italy should be changed. Firstly, they are too restrictive and unenlightened, and, secondly, each province has preserved its antiquated laws, so that there is no uniformity throughout the land. Owing to the confusion and uncertainty reigning in this question, there are endless law-suits and violations of the laws: such an amount of red-tape officialism [*sic*] is required as effectually to discourage scientific work in many cases, and, notwithstanding the

---

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Orsi, P. 1911. Croton. Prima campagna di scavi al santuario di Hera Lacinia. *Notizie degli Scavi Antichità*, Supplemento: 77—124.

most benevolent of intentions, the letter of the law is made to kill the spirit. (Frothingham 1887: 389)

In the field of archaeology at that time, “unenlightened” was code for “unwilling to allow foreigners free rein.” By enforcing “the letter of the law,” Orsi did two things. First, he asserted the Italian state’s right to protect and manage its own archaeological objects. In Orsi’s day there was widespread despair among foreign scholars (and some domestic ones) over the Italian government’s perceived inability to study and protect systematically its archaeological artifacts and sites. Orsi’s Italian colleagues admired as patriotic his confrontation with the American team. He, too, was aware of the nationalist significance of his action:

Of the [American archaeologists’] accusations, some of them well founded and some of them exaggerated, this, at least, could be accepted as true: that Italy, after half a century of the proclamation of its unity, had never attempted [to excavate] a place as famous and promising [as Croton]. [...] As soon as I was appointed director of the archaeological superintendence at Calabria, I took it upon my honor to demonstrate how Italy, too, could muster its own resources, even if on a more modest scale, to meet the just desires of the scientific world.<sup>48</sup>

Orsi’s second immediate impact was the expansion of the definition of *scavi abusivi* or illicit excavations. Orsi, like many archaeological superintendents, already faced the problem of local residents digging for objects without a permit and selling their finds to private collectors (Iannelli 2005; Paoletti 2005). Archaeologists such as Clarke and Frothingham could contrast their own activities with those of the local illicit diggers, even though both sets of actors removed artifacts from the Italian public sphere, on grounds that they (the archaeologists) worked in the interest of science. Orsi rejected this argument and, while not going so far as to label permit-less archaeologists “looters,” he subjected them to the same bureaucratic procedures

---

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

and concomitant punishments. The idea that scientists should be able to conduct their work autonomous from state policies and procedures, an idea widely shared by archaeologists, was firmly corrected by Orsi. Archaeologists should be allowed to do their work, yes, but the state's agents would decide who would dig, where, and when.

The case of Paolo Orsi and Croton sheds light on the complex interplay of knowledge forms and local identities in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Italian archaeology. Orsi was born in Roverato, near Trento (northern Italy). He made his career in southern Italy, holding posts in Calabria and Sicily, places his northern colleagues typically eschewed as wild and unpromising. He gained the respect of his scholarly colleagues for his tough stance against illicit excavating and became “the heroic figure of a new age of state-sponsored, scientific archaeological research in the Italian South” (Ceserani 2012: 194). This was also a time of enormous investment in other nations' own schools and institutes of study in Italy and Greece (Marchand 1996). Such institutes often ran their own excavation programs, which aimed at unearthing antiquities that could be both studied as scientific objects and displayed back home, in national museums, as objects of cultural achievement. Ceserani argues, “The archaeological institutions established by the new Italian state, molded in this competitive, nationalistic context, were part of a reformulation of the country's classical past as a *national heritage*” (Ceserani 2012: 195). As well as fighting the internal menace of looting, then, Orsi faced the challenges presented by foreign scholars with powerful institutional connections and vast supplies of cash.

In the early years of Orsi's career – specifically, the 1870s – Italian archaeologists fought with foreign diggers and scholars, as well as domestic collectors and dealers, for epistemic authority. Before the showdown at Croton with the Americans, Orsi had to contend with the powerful network of elite collectors who freely circulated through government and courtly

channels to earn money by exporting Italian cultural objects. To understand the context in which Orsi would operate, it is therefore necessary to look further back.

The circulation of antiquities and art works in Italy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century involved a tangle of relationships among diplomats, scholars, and wealthy collectors within and outside of Italy. The story of the Castellani family is illustrative. Over the course of nearly a century, Fortunato Pio Castellani and his sons put together the largest private collection of antiquities in Italy – some six thousand pieces. Fortunato Pio was a goldsmith who made a fortune with his inventive metallurgical techniques. He started his collection by purchasing ancient jewelry and other works in precious metals (Aluffi Pentini 2005). Two of his sons, Alessandro and Augusto, took up the practice of collecting, both with great success. After Alessandro joined the fight for unification and was forced to seek exile in France, Augusto took over the family’s collecting and dealing operations in Italy.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Augusto built an antiquities empire. Napoleon III, who shared Augusto’s passion for antiquities and for jewelry, introduced Augusto at the French court and it was through this connection that Augusto became the go-to dealer for aristocratic French and Italian collectors of antiquities. Augusto specialized in ready-made collections: of Etruscan urns, Greek vases, Roman intaglios, and women’s jewelry. His foreign clients no longer needed to wait years to amass a collection, nor take a year or two from their lives to travel to Italy and traverse the peninsula themselves in search of objects. For the right price, Augusto Castellani would ship an antiquities collection intact to his clients in Paris, London, Munich, Amsterdam, Vienna, Geneva, and Moscow. To brush up on their knowledge of antiquities (and thus make the collections feel like their own), Castellani’s clients were given crib sheets with brief explanations of object type, age, material, history, and meaning for every object in their collection. The

objects' meanings were commodified and transcribed from their Italian findspot to the private home or palace to which they were sent.

The twist is this: At the peak of his career Augusto Castellani, the inveterate private collector whose homes and horses and fabled dinners were paid for by antiquities deals, became an outspoken advocate for state ownership of antiquities. Elected honorary director of the Capitoline Museums in 1873, Augusto was tasked with stocking the Capitoline galleries with Roman and Etruscan objects. He threw himself into the work energetically, speaking passionately to the Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica that year about the importance of protecting Italy's artworks and artifacts for "the glorification of the nation." We know from archival records that he held audiences with men and women from rural Lazio who trekked into Rome proffering the statuettes and bronze helmets and painted vases that they had found (Moretti Sgubini 2000). Castellani paid in cash for the objects he purchased. Fakes he discarded. The antiquities that he did not want for the Capitoline collections he sometimes bought with his own money in order to sell through his vast network of collectors and dealers. By what logic could Augusto Castellani be selling off ancient artifacts to foreigners yet extolling the virtues of national culture for the Italian people?

The paradox of Augusto Castellani's collecting activities illuminates the hybrid nature of national heritage in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century. Questions of property were central to the transition from noble guardianship to people's heritage. The evidentiary basis for this assertion are two sets of documents in the Archivio di Stato in Rome: the Fondo Castellani papers, and papers from the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works (*Ministero del Commercio e dei Lavoro Pubblici*). The Fondo Castellani collection features private letters, bills of sale, government papers, excavation permits, and bank statements. It is, in short, a goldmine of information about the antiquities that

passed through the hands of Fortunato Pio, Augusto, and Alessandro from the 1830s to the 1910s. The private letters reveal that near the end of his life Fortunato Pio regretted his role in exporting so many cultural treasures from Italy. He left a substantial portion of his estate for the specific purpose of hiring artisans to reproduce the most noteworthy of those exported treasures, basing their work on the meticulous catalogue information that Fortunato Pio kept for his business dealings. What can be learned from the Fondo Castellani collection, in short, is that the Castellani men's ideas about the value and meaning of antiquities changed over the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and especially after Unification – if not precisely lockstep with political and governmental change, then clearly temporally correlated.

The papers in the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works offer a view of antiquities management from the government's point of view. As I explained in Chapter Two, the cultural guardianship laws that had been in place in Italian kingdoms and city-states since the 1700s allowed for private ownership of antiquities but required private owners to seek government approval before modifying or selling the objects. Until 1909, government officials – first in Commerce and Public Works, later in Education – were responsible for approving modification, sale, and exportation requests. I read twenty-two letters of petition to the Ministry, most of which were written by diplomatic representatives of foreign governments or monarchs. (Many more letters of petition were available but I determined that I had a representative sample with twenty-two.) I found no rejections and a handful of conditional approvals (meaning the petition was granted but tweaked, typically with Ministry officials demanding a higher export fee than what was proposed). This low rejection rate surprised me, but it was precisely the object of scrutiny for supporters of nationalized antiquities. Guardianship laws were ineffective to staunch the outward flow of Italian cultural treasures because they left too many loopholes and encouraged

gray areas in which individual Ministry staffers' judgment could be swayed or bought outright.

The intent of guardianship laws had been to allow duplicate or superfluous objects to be exported from kingdom or city. That intent did not scale up to national jurisdiction.

To keep the present discussion manageable, I offer a small sample of the archival material that I read. From the Fondo Castellani I prioritize antiquities deals arranged by Augusto. From the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works I prioritize export petitions that were approved. In both, I am interested in the power relations between collector (importer) and dealer (Augusto; government official) and in the sorts of objects that were sought after.

#### Castellani the master dealer

Monsieur Castellani,

The Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar would like to add the four salt-cellars [with the Triton theme] that we chose the other day [in Castellani's shop]. The salt-cellars should be sent to the address of Her Royal Highness on June 1 to Weimar.

She asks that she be advised of the shipment of these objects.

With our most distinguished greetings,

Dr. Nancy [on behalf of the Grand Duchess]

In countless letters like these, Augusto's global network of buyers, dealers, and scholars is revealed. Castellani regularly dealt with noble purchasers, and he seems to have regularly procured what they sought: in the case of the Grand Duchess of Saxe-Weimar, four salt-cellars. In other cases, the procurements were grander: he sent a collection of Etruscan vases to the Museum of Art and Industry in Vienna, a shipment requiring twelve large wooden cases and

payment of 3000 *scudi*.<sup>49</sup> In his correspondence with scholars and hobby collectors, Castellani offered tips on how to authenticate vases, what to look for in Roman cameos, and how much the Capitoline Museums should offer to purchase the marble statues, vases, and ancient coins that were routinely brought to Museum staff by citizens and travelers looking to make a deal.

Castellani's antiquities work featured several forms of expertise and institutional connections. Although he was richer and more famous than the average antiquities dealer, Castellani's diverse commitments were common in his milieu. Castellani was acting within the realm of the existing legal framework of cultural guardianship. He enjoyed handsome remuneration through his export business, using his government contacts in Rome to ease the transport of artifacts. If he shared his father's deathbed regrets at having dispersed Italy's cultural heritage to foreign galleries, he did not show it. In one document he jotted to himself (or in an unsent letter intended for someone else) that he felt "very attached to these little pieces [artifacts] and only willing to sell because I know that Sig. G. [Signore "G", a nameless buyer] will take good care of them."<sup>50</sup> His form of for-profit, private guardianship, then, was rooted in paternalistic ideas about antiquities belonging rightfully to the community of European elites who were prepared to take good care of the objects.

Castellani seems to have received summary approval from state officials for his exportation of antiquities. What private letters I uncovered that mentioned this business included very little detail; normally, a Monsieur here or a Signor there has signed off (whether literally or metaphorically we do not know) on a Castellani sale of an Italian antiquity. What more do we know about the process of government approval of antiquities exportation? I will address this

---

<sup>49</sup> Letter from R. Eiselberger, director of the K.K. Museum für Kunst und Industrie in Vienna, to A. Castellani. July 17, 1885. Archivio di Stato, Rome. Fondo Castellani collection, fasc. 13.

<sup>50</sup> Undated note to self by Augusto Castellani [unsigned; identification based on handwriting]. Archivio di Stato, Rome. Fondo Castellani collection, Buste 199-200.



question in the next section. This inquiry matters because it sheds light on the Italian government's organizational approach to safeguarding antiquities in the years prior to nationalization.

### Privilege and presumption

The process for removing artworks and monuments of historical significance involved petitioning the Ministry with a description of the desired objects. There were no standardized forms. Petitions were handwritten, with Ministry letterhead occasionally used but mostly blank pages embellished with diplomatic seals and signatures. Government officials sometimes inspected the objects to determine their historical value to Italy, as this exchange shows.

Rome, le 19 decembre 1862

Son Excellence

Monsieur le Baron Costantini Baldini,

Ministre des Beaux Arts du Commerce et des Oeuvres Publics

Rome, December 19, 1862

I am preparing to send back to my Government shortly, around 75 vases and utensils of Etruscan and Greek art of different sizes. I have, as a result, the honor of praying Your Excellency's permission to give me the authorization necessary that the items might be taken out of the Pontifical States. [My translation from the French]<sup>51</sup>

---

<sup>51</sup> Archivio di Stato. Collection: Ministero del Commercio e dei Lavoro Pubblici, Provincia di Roma, Sezione 5, Titolo 1, Fascicolo 5. File name: Ministro del Belgio Estiazione di oggetti d'arte, num. del protocollo 8461, Dec. 1862. (Archivio di Stato di Roma, Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, Commercio, Belle Arti, Industria e Agricoltura (1855-1870), Busta 420.) Document: Letter from the Belgium delegation ("Légation de Belgique") to the Minister for Commerce and Public Works, Rome, 19 Dec 1862.

The next letter in the series was from the Minister of Belgium to the Minister of Commerce and Public works. The Belgian Minister told his Italian colleague that the vases in question could be inspected at the Villa Strozzi, in Rome, before exportation. The inspection seems to have taken place on December 23. A letter of December 24, 1862, addressed to the Italian Minister from one of his employees in the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works, gives a pronouncement on the

I have recently been to the Villa Strozzi to inspect there the 75 ceramic vases of Etruscan manufacture, which his Honor the Minister of the Belgians has asked Your Excellency's permission to extract (*estrarre*) from Rome.

None of these vessels, most of which are black and without painting is of such merit for scholarship or art that they occasion my remarks. For this reason Your Excellency can without [further consideration] approve the petition [of the Belgians]. Yours with profound respect, Your loyal servant [handwriting indecipherable].<sup>52</sup>

This exchange, repeated again and again in the archival documents, offers the salient features of how cultural guardianship was managed by the government. Petitioners – the owners of the objects or the owners' representatives – wrote to the Minister asking for permission to export, sell, or alter the antiquities and artworks in question. A Ministry employee was asked to make a recommendation. The Minister (apparently) acted according to the recommendation. We know very little about the Ministry staffers tasked with making such recommendations. The man who went to the Villa Strozzi to inspect the Vienna-bound artifacts may have known something about Etruscan ceramic wares or very little. Physical inspections did not occur every time a request was made. When, in July 1864, a Borghese prince wrote to the Minister for permission to move and

---

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* Document name: A Sua Eccellenza il Signor Barone Commend. P.D. Costantini Baldini Ministro del Commercio e lavori pubblici. Dec. 24, 1862.

restore historic oil paintings from a church in his jurisdiction, there was evidently no inquiry into the methods of removal and restoration or the appropriateness of doing so.<sup>53</sup>

These documents make it clear that historic artworks and antiquities were constantly on the go, within Italy and to points beyond, and the government officials involved with this work relied on judgment calls and personal ties to adjudicate petitions. The premise of guardianship being paternalistic private ownership, antiquities were not presumed to be government property. The job of the Ministry of Commerce was to ensure the smooth running of guardianship. Authority was invested in the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works because antiquities were classified as commercial objects. This classification in turn made them *seen* as commercial objects, specifically as commercial objects for elites (Mitchell 1999).

The cultural logic that equated antiquities with commerce was slow to change. But in the debates surrounding the proposed 1909 law, antiquities' price was cast in a new light. No longer would the Italian government have to bow and scrape before the foreign dukes and diplomats who purchased and exported Italy's cultural treasures. In the new discourse of patrimony as birthright, the Italian nation-state emerged as the rightful owner of everything.

### **Private to Public Collections: Prezzo Americano and the push for state ownership**

The fiercest enemies of the national artistic heritage (*nemici del patrimonio artistico nazionale*) are the art dealers. They are running the city and the countryside to find these objects, they are profiting off economic hardship or ignorance of the owners to buy them and concoct the most audacious fraud to export them to people even more clever: and we all know, for example, the

---

<sup>53</sup> Ministero del Commercio e dei Lavori Pubblici, Provincia di Roma, Sezione 5, Titolo 1, Fascicolo 5. File name: Il Principe Borghese domanda di estrarre alcuni Dipinti, num. Del protocollo: 4097, 1864. (Archivio di Stato di Roma, Ministero dei Lavori Pubblici, Commercio, Belle Arti, Industria e Agricoltura (1855-1870), Busta 420.)

story of the cope of Ascoli, which was exported into a pillar of alabaster ... [These dealers] are the accomplices of the criminal aesthetes (*esteti del delitto*), the thieves of art objects.<sup>54</sup>

On June 20, 1909, members of the Camera dei Deputati (Chamber of Deputies) voted in favor of DLgs 1909/364. Eight days later King Vittorio Emanuele III officially endorsed the legislation. Up to this point I have referred in shorthand to the antiquities nationalization law of 1909. Now we need to look more closely at its text to understand its intention. The scope, impact, and administration of the legislation are described in forty-two Articles, covering several pages of text. I include translations of the first three acts and will refer to others as the discussion unfolds.

#### Decreto legislativo 1909/364

**Article 1.** The provisions of this Act apply to all immovable and movable things (*le cose immobili e mobili*) that have historical, archaeological, artistic or paleo-ethnological interest. The Act does not apply to structures and artworks made by living persons, or those things whose execution does not go back more than fifty years. Among “movables” we also include historic codexes, ancient manuscripts, the incunabula, prints and engravings rare and precious, and things of numismatic interest.

**Article 2.** The things mentioned in the previous article are inalienable when they belong to the government of the state, of municipalities, or of provinces; to a vestry, monasteries, or ecclesiastical charities of any kind and in any recognized moral authority. The Ministry of Education, in accordance with the decision of the High Council for Antiquities and Fine Arts, established by the Law of 27 June 1907 no. 386, will allow the sale and exchange of these things from one to another of the entities named above when no damage comes to their storage and no serious compromise to public enjoyment results (*menomato il pubblico godimento*).

**Article 3.** The mayors, presidents of provincial deputations, the wardens, parish priests, rectors of churches, and all the directors of charities will present to the Ministry of Education, in accordance with rules to be laid

---

<sup>54</sup> Atti Parlamentari Camera Deputati, Vol. 234, Sessione 1909. Discussioni 2, 24 maggio – 18 giugno 1909, pages 1405-1430.

down in the Regulations, the descriptive list of things in Article 1 owned or administered by their institution.

Deputies debated the text of the proposed legislation over a three-day period, beginning March 27, 1909. The Hon. Carlo Francesco Ferraris, representative from Alessandria and former Minister for Public Works, led the discussion. It was he who assailed art collectors as the fiercest enemies of the national artistic heritage. That statement was mild in comparison with other invective that he introduced to the assembly. Ferraris was there, above all, to do battle with men like Augusto Castellani: private owners of antiquities who sold Italy's cultural heritage to the highest bidder.

Ferraris presented a pointed structural criticism: that under the current system of antiquities guardianship, the Italian government was forced to play the role of price-taker to private owners and foreign collectors. As enshrined by the 1907 Antiquities Act (DLgs 1907/500, ratified 14 July 1907), when a new artifact or ancient artwork was discovered on private land, the landowner had first right of refusal. If the government expressed an interest in the object, whether a humble pot or a marble portrait of Augustus, the government had to come up with the money to buy it from the owner. The problem was that prices were set too high, in accordance with the demands of the international art market. This was the system in which Castellani operated, and the 1907 formalized that system and introduced modest steps to stabilize prices. But Ferraris argued that the 1907 law was inherently flawed because it made no distinction between domestic and international valuations of antiquities.<sup>55</sup> Rather than let private appraisers and multinational art dealers set the prices, Ferraris argued, the Italian government should take control: "From the moment that we establish government control over the circulation

---

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1406.

of art works by limiting private ownership of art works, from the moment that we recognize in the state the directive to care for our artistic patrimony [...] it seems to me necessary to consider the commercial aspects.”<sup>56</sup> Ferraris argued that the state should go beyond passive guardianship. The state should oversee and regulate the international trade in such goods.

Ferraris explicitly linked the running of the state with the monitoring of antiquities commerce. For him the two went together:

If we discipline this trade well [get control over it], we will do a true service to our country by putting a stop to fraudulent export and to the dispersion of our objects of art (*oggetti d'arte*).<sup>57</sup>

Ferraris concluded his remarks and yielded the floor. The next speaker was the Minister for Public Instruction, Hon. Luigi Rava. Rava continued Ferraris’s critique of the pricing system to a new, more controversial question: Should Italy’s antiquities be subject to market forces at all? Or could his fellow deputies/elected representatives envisage a system in which their patrimony treasures were permanently invested in the people, with the state acting as custodian-owner? Rava’s words are critical and merit reproduction in full:

Now here we have to recognize: what has come in to fashion – against every honorable intention – is the American price. Every time that Americans offer to the [Italian] State to acquire an object of art, or a private collector finds something in an excavation – [...] in our soil – the Italian market, the experts, the artists, the archaeologists, those who have dedicated much study and much love to this material, fix a price; the price is that which is highest at the time, because everybody knows that that which costs 10.000 or 20.000 lire adds a tenth [in value] every year hence.

But before proposing the sale, we come up against the American price (*prezzo americano*), and it is so fabulously, inconceivably high that we must defend ourselves against this exaggeration, because more than a few times it

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1407-1408.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1408.

is [from] the skillful maneuvering of sellers, antiquarians, agents, etc. We must therefore start from the base of the real price, the reasonable price, honestly determined by authorized persons, and with parity among [all parties] and the contracting party represented, and thus we establish prices that are suitably honest for the Italian market.

We should take into account in such determination of prices in the antiquities market that are fixed by exporters or sellers, knowing their desire to create museums and galleries quickly in far-away America they create ownership possibilities for themselves through fabulous prices. We need to set the true price [as these] acquisitive Americans tally their lists. So many of the antiquities that they have bought are not even antiquities! (lit. *Quante cose antiche hanno comprato, che antiche non sono!*)<sup>58</sup>

Rava agreed with Ferraris that private ownership was a problem and that the current system of pricing antiquities disadvantaged the Italian government. Unlike Ferraris, he specified a single, most egregious private owner: the wealthy American industrialist or museum. Italian buyers could never match the *prezzo americano* – the fabulously high prices set by culture-greedy Americans. But nor, suggested Rava, should they have to. Italians needed to think of themselves as *owners* of antiquities and historic monuments and artworks, rather than as mere custodians of things awaiting their “real” owners:

We need the law [as proposed] so that we can direct, renovate, modify, and regulate the right of property [coming from] excavations, for the conservation of immovable monuments, and for other things. I know that it won't be perfect, but we have to try whatever means we can.<sup>59</sup>

Rava's phrase, *prezzo americano*, became a rallying cry among his colleagues. American museums were resented for their massive war chests. Their apparently impoverished cultural history positioned them to need to import another country's. What Rava was doing, in the politically contentious years just prior to World War I, was foment disagreement with a

---

<sup>58</sup> Atti Parlamentari Camera Deputati, Vol. 234, Sessione 1909. Discussioni 2, 24 maggio – 18 giugno 1909, page 1410.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 1411.

particular national enemy. By denouncing the “American price” and asserting Italy’s rightful ownership, Rava was simultaneously rewriting the modern meaning of artifacts and crafting a new form of power and authority for state governments.

The opening language of the 1909 Act reflects Rava’s concern for total state control over cultural objects: “moveable and immoveable,” things in the ground and above it. It was deliberately crafted to close any possible loopholes. Antiquities were now to be administered by the Ministry for Education rather than for the Ministry of Commerce and Public Works. This institutional shift signaled their importance not as objects of commerce but rather as *national* treasures, with potential for educating and fostering loyalty in the national population.

### **Knowing the nation, possessing the soil**

It is in the context of this transitional period before the 1909 Act that Orsi’s actions must be understood. The 1875 legislation that created a Ministry for museums stipulated that the Ministry was to be headed by “a man of great scientific competence and of a very administrative attitude.” He should be able to understand deeply the significance of the excavations and objects, and coordinate his administrative activities efficiently in the service of progressing scientific archaeology and protecting the history of Italy. Left unstated was the aim of such competence and administrative aptitude: to concentrate artifactual expertise in professional archaeologists by sifting out and rejecting knowledge forms considered “folk” or too local. What was at stake?

In his own excavations, Orsi employed a work method that blended institutional and local expertise. He relied on information from farmers about promising dig sites before he began excavating. Orsi collected such information systematically, checking farmers’ reports against each other and ensuring that he covered a wide geographic area. When it came to the actual excavation work, Orsi employed local men to do the digging and local women to haul away the



dirt in baskets (Sabbione 2005: 199). He earned the locals' respect by paying them more than double what they would have earned as agricultural day laborers.

Orsi's research and excavation methods meant that he was constantly in contact with locals. By "locals" we can include peasants and farmers, as well as landowners, barons, fellow archaeologists, and collectors. This was a complex *ambiente archeologico* or archaeological milieu, and reducing it to a sphere of interaction between experts and non-experts is too simplistic. Peasants and farmers held one form of expertise, a self-experienced and embodied knowledge of the land. Landowners and barons blended their own local knowledge of the land with didactic knowledge drawn from formal schooling. Fellow archaeologists and collectors brought yet another mode of expertise, one based on knowledge of multiple sites and localities, types of objects, and (in many cases) exposure to professional publications and technical journals. As I have written elsewhere, the nature of archaeology is that it brings together multiple modes of knowing the land and the subsoil matrix. These epistemologies intersect and conflict, yet the norms of academic publishing, excavation regulation, and authoritative classifications privilege institutionalized archaeology in sifting through epistemological options and asserting the best one (Rose-Greenland 2013a).

Orsi can therefore be seen as the prototype for a specifically Italian archaeologist, whose approach to the scientific task at hand is inseparable from a dedication to the advancement of state control over the sphere of archaeology. Indeed, as has just been illustrated, in Italy, the pursuit of these two goals has, for the past century-and-a-half, been closely intertwined both at the legislative and operational level.

## The archaeologist as seer in the twenty-first century

Andrea Carandini has a dream. The dream is that Italians will gain a better understanding of themselves, and of Italy's place in the world, by studying the past. For Carandini the past is "continually projected and re-projected by each present moment, similar to how we have come to envision the days yet to come" (Carandini 2007: 7). Carandini's preferred past is ancient, extending well back before the three big R's of canonical Italian historiography (*Risorgimento*, *Rinascimento*, and ancient Rome). Carandini's teleological vision is rooted in the founding of the city of Rome, some time in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. This date, he reminds us, puts the city of Rome in good company with another celebrated city from antiquity:

Rome is no less old than Athens, which well qualifies it as the most ancient city-state and, moreover, as the most influential, having created a vast empire stretching from Portugal to Mesopotamia, from Germany to the Fezzan. In this city [Rome] and its ecumenical power reside the principle roots of our identity, which still nurtures our mode of living, feeling and thinking. (Carandini 2007: 14)

Carandini acknowledges that his project is "mythohistorical" [*mitistoriche*] because it blends "realities that are part myth, part history" (Carandini 2007: 12). Finding convincing material evidence of Romulus's and Remus's lives and deeds is a project that many of his fellow archaeologists have given up on, but Carandini marshals the weight of 13 meters' worth of stratigraphy and its contents. Carandini digs for Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome. In doing so, he seeks the *miracolo* of the city's founding. By digging for Romulus he promotes a messianic vision of artifactual materiality as national treasure. This national treasure offers the key to understanding modern Italy. In this modernity, the ordering of the world into nation-states is taken for granted.

Carandini is a cultural celebrity, a figure specific to Italian public life that has no immediate equivalent in the contemporary United States. He has held a number of high-profile positions including that of official archaeology advisor to the government. His explicit authority has covered the issuing of excavation permits and appointments to archaeology superintendencies, while his informal influence extends to PhD placements, resource allocation, and, perhaps most importantly, popular thinking about archaeology, history, and the modern nation-state. As a celebrity archaeologist he continues in the tradition of his former teacher Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli, who enjoyed widespread following in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and who linked archaeology with broader discourses of cultural identity and national pride. For millions of Italians, Carandini is the most authoritative voice on archaeology, history, and the Italian present. His romantic theories about the civilizational birthright of Italians are backed up by the systematic nature of archaeological procedure.

The “miracolo” at the heart of this quest is actually a man, Romulus, a person of Etruscan roots (*persona dalla radice etrusca*) (Carandini 2007: 29). Here, again, is the association between modernity and the authentic Etruscan period. Carandini presents thorny archaeological and stratigraphic material with the ease and simplicity of a grandfatherly chat, and his popular books are peppered with line drawings of 8<sup>th</sup> century Romans feasting, worshipping, and farming. The complexity of his data – data that archaeologists still struggle to interpret – is glossed over by Carandini’s straightforward assertions. The purpose to all of this, he says, is to ask ourselves “if any historical link or identity still ties us to the first Romans, or if Romulus is like a primitive king from any other part of the world for us” (Carandini 2007: [xxx]).

Carandini fleshes out his messianic vision at the end of *Roma: Il primo giorno*:

I believe that our connection with the pagan world of our origins – the time of Homer and Romulus – is still alive and lies in the discovery first made by

the ancients in Greece, Etruria, and Rome of a particular way of organizing life [a model] in which people manage to live together by mitigating centralized power within a unique form of organization, which we can call, as the ancients did, a “mixed constitution.”

The twist, Carandini continues, is that in order for this form of social organization to be successful it relies upon the cooperation of the people, who must be able to live in concord, “beyond all differences,” without considering one another an enemy. Westerners are capable of this, he says, but easterners are not. This is why Carandini calls peaceable mixed societies an aspect of *syndrome occidentale* or “Western syndrome” (Carandini 2007a). “Eastern syndrome,” on the other hand, is “intrinsically and perpetually despotic in character” (Carandini 2007: 106). The roots of Western syndrome lie in the *civitas* (city) of early-archaic Rome. The significance of Rome thus takes on new significance in Carandini’s narrative: not merely as the first city of Rome and the starting point of an empire, but the birthplace of a powerful and positive ideology of organizing the world.

Birth is a powerful metaphor in Carandini’s historical narrative. Readers of *Roma: Il primo giorno* are told that excavations between the Palatine hill and Roman forum reveal “structural information” that proves the “birth of Rome” (Carandini 2007a: 116). The early city used a calendar with ten months, “like human pregnancy,” Carandini points out. The end of the Roman year (December 23) comes precisely 274 days after the oldest known Roman New Year’s date (March 15) – and the ancient Romans believed that a human pregnancy lasted 274 days. The symbolic rebirth of the city at the end of each year signals a civic fertility that is, for Carandini, evidence of Rome’s eternity.

What matters here is that metaphors of birth make the city of Rome appear natural. The city was not constructed so much as birthed. The lineage of legitimate civilization becomes clear: modern Italians stem from ancient Romans, who in turn were birthed by a settlement that began

with the natural procreative rhythms of the earth. In Carandini's vision the national treasure is the materiality of the Roman Empire and the ideological legacy that it has bequeathed to modern Italians. There is no more powerful assertion of nation-state nationalism than to say that the nation stems from a natural process of birth.

### **The Power of Culture and the Culture of Power in Museums**

The past, as embodied in historic sites and museums, while existing in a frame which separates it from the present, is entirely the product of the present practices which organize and maintain that frame. (Bennett 1995: 130)

The public museum is a crucial location for imparting the state's view of acceptable forms of engagement with culture. In fact, it is difficult to think of any other place where members of the public can see ancient art apart from churches. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, visitors to Italy wrote about lavish displays of Etruscan and Roman vases and statues in homes, municipal buildings, theaters, coffee houses, and parks. Today these sites have been eclipsed or eliminated altogether by the rise of the public museum. This shift has been explained as the outcome of the state's intensified commitment to protecting the nation's art. But this answer assumes that cultural goods cannot find adequate protection in alternative locations, including those cited above. In fact, Italian archaeologists freely admit that due to staffing shortages and pressure on preservation and storage resources, museums are the "best of bad options" for unearthed antiquities. What explains the rise of the museum as the state's preferred destination for cultural goods is the logic of obligation without ownership.

In 1875, via the work of Ruggiero Bonghi, there was born the first embryonic structure of guardianship. Fiorelli was the first central director of excavations and museums. This is what

Bonghi said about the new administrative creation in the Camera dei Deputati (my translation from the Italian):

It's necessary to determine the distribution of expenditures, as per this administration, and that this Ministry should be a technical as well as an administrative office, with the capacity to regulate excavations and inspect museums and oversee conservation projects, as well as to issue licenses. The government should also have the power to unify scientific findings and disseminate them to scholars, private individuals, towns, and all of the provinces. It also reserves for itself the right to determine historical value of the objects found.

This was an unusual report. Bonghi and Fiorelli were specifying the objectives of the new administration together with the actual structure of the proposed administrative organization. As we shall see, these objectives and structure would lay the groundwork for state-sanctioned cultural interaction, which came to play a central role in Italian national identity.

Indeed, today, for those Italians who are not inclined to visit a museum, there are ample opportunities for cultural exposure through popular media. Television shows, regular culture supplements in newspapers, and radio programs tell them about art, history, archaeology, and literature. Whereas similar fare in the North America would be aimed at a highly educated, affluent audience, in Italy the target audience is broader, more populist, without the assumption that the populist audience is ignorant. For example, archaeologist Umberto Broccoli's popular radio show *Con parole mie* (carried through the Berlusconi-owned firm RAI) features broadcasts about history, culture, and politics that are intended for the sort of ordinary, un- or semi-employed people who are home or in the car with the radio on a weekday. Broccoli worked for the Archaeological Superintendent of Rome for years as a medieval specialist, and was later appointed to the national oversight committee of MiBAC to advise on archaeological projects and dig permits. His official links with state archaeological offices give Broccoli authority to

opine on national radio and television. He weaves his institutional experience casually into his chatty lectures about historical buildings, sites, and objects. Broccoli promotes a populist archaeological knowledge that is grounded in state discourse, yet made non-technical and appreciable and in this way familiar and relevant to the everyday Italian.

The specific focus that I devote to museums merits explanation. In public museums we find the historical memory of the administration of culture, not just because the objects and their display apparatus are documents of administrative procedures, but also because through the very act of classifying and labeling objects as *beni culturali* (cultural treasures) the rhetoric of national culture reproduces itself institutionally.

Hooper-Greenhill (1992)'s study of British museums offers insights that may illuminate the case of Italian museums. She identifies two 19<sup>th</sup> century schools of thought about the pedagogical role of museums. The first was that the education offered by the museum would have a pacifying effect, putting the people in their place and discouraging class unrest. The second held that the educative powers of the museum would help to civilize the poor and unschooled, fostering a coherent national identity and sense of shared responsibility for the health of the Empire (or, in our case, the *patria*). Hooper-Greenhill cites as a specific example the National Portrait Gallery,

[Whose task was] the assemblage of a collection of images of the heroes of the British state which would lead the beholder to 'mental exertion, noble actions, to good conduct.' History, represented as a temporal progression of the great and the good, was held up as an example to be imitated through intellectual endeavor, through heroic acts, or (failing both of these) merely by behaving well. (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 189)

The Gallery, and the many disciplinary national museums that followed it, achieved patriotic viewership in part through "the depiction of an 'imagined community,' a community that drew

its constituents from the past (those who were to be viewed), and from the present (those who were to be the viewers). The intersections of these imagined and corporeal bodies, juxtaposed through imagined connections between the past and the contemporary, created a new cultural nodal point, one that was constituted through perceptions of the identity of the nation which were deeply cut through with assumptions about class, gender and race” (Rutledge 2012: 14).

19<sup>th</sup> century case studies of power and museums are rich with theoretical possibilities because their aims and procedural norms now seem hopelessly old fashioned and explicitly colonialist, racist, and sexist. While some museums persist with questionable –isms and all museums use classificatory and narrative practices that can be unpacked as subjective and political, the now-discredited 19<sup>th</sup> century disciplinary museum cannot offer the final word on what museums *do*, sociologically. Museums of art, even national museums of classical art and antiquities, are run by men and women whose ideas and personal politics are linked with the same social forces that touch all of us. Museums change: new conservation techniques, display methods, and uses of technology seek to engender viewers’ interest and support. The purpose of my case studies of recent exhibitions, then, is to support my revisiting of the theory of disciplinary museums and to confirm my contribution in uncovering new modes of expressing identity and nationhood through ancient objects

This contribution can be summed up as the observation that, in Italy in particular, museums are used by the authorities (who, as is made clear above, operate in a mutually-reinforcing collaboration between the state and archaeology) to impress upon the public a specific relationship with objects, which are to be viewed not so much as individual art objects, but as an aggregated whole which is inseparable from the *patria* and the soil itself. I now turn to two case studies to support this claim specifically, before turning to a third study to investigate



the way in which museums are deployed to reinforce looting discourse and thus entrench the power of the state-archaeology collaboration. Following these case studies I offer the conclusion to the chapter.

### Case Study 1: The pedagogical power of museums

During a visit to one of Rome's largest antiquities museums, I joined a group of adolescents on a school trip to the Etruscan galleries. I stood at the edge of the group, close enough to hear and observe them but with sufficient space to allow their interactions to flow naturally. There were 22 students, ranging in age from 12 to 14, and their attention waned after about twenty minutes in the gallery. Their guide, a 20-something female employee of the museum, attempted to re-engage them:

Ragazzi! Ragazzi! Shhhh! Ascoltami! Ecco, un oggetto molto importante. Sta zitto! Ecco, un pezzo della nostra storia -- è bellissimo [...]

Kids! Kids! Shhhh! Listen to me! Look, here's a really important object. Shut up! Look, a piece of our history – it is absolutely beautiful [...]

The guide sought to gain the students' attention by reminding them that the "very important" object -- in this case, an Etruscan funerary urn -- was "a piece of our history." The invocation of *our* history, collectively owned, recurred at several points in the tour. The guide, with the help of the students' teachers, encouraged the children to understand the Etruscan artefacts not as products of 6th century BC men and women who spoke a different language and worshipped strange deities, but as products of contemporary Italy. There was no break in history from the Etruscans to the children: the objects were their "eredità materiali" (material inheritance) and it was their job to assimilate them as aspects of their identity.

Students were also told that it was their duty to protect that material inheritance. This was done in part by forbidding their physical engagement with the objects. The guide did not explain what might happen to the pots and urns if the students touched them. Instead, she told them firmly that the objects were “too valuable” for their hands. This injunction was reinforced by fencing off objects from the visitors, using warning signs, vigilant security guards, alarmed wires, and rope barricades. At other times it was achieved by placing objects behind glass. By physically separating *beni culturali* from the *cittadini*, officials place cultural goods in a separate social matrix, obliquely related to the one inhabited by the everyday viewers. The objects are thus understood as products of, but not integrally part of, our society. They are fetishized; touching them is strictly taboo. Bourdieu (1980 [1990]) stressed that mechanisms of social domination and reproduction are primarily focused on bodily know-how and competent practices in the social world. The students at the museum had this bodily know-how drilled into them. The enforced, hushed reverence for the objects was intended to give the young museumgoers a feel for the game of national culture, instilling a practical logic that would forever shape their interactions with national culture.

Enlisting the students’ devotion to the objects was also sought by stressing the objects’ unique aesthetic and historical properties. On the main floor of the museum, the Euphronios *krater* is prominently displayed (see Chapter Three for my retelling of the *krater*’s repatriation to Italy). The students were told the story of how the *krater* had been illegally removed from Italian soil, wrongly purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and finally returned to Italy due to the efforts of state attorneys. Wrapping up her story, the guide drove home her point:

Okay, so the *krater* of Euphronios is hugely important in the corpus of Greek ceramics. Its pictures are absolutely brilliant. [...] It was in a foreign museum for many years but our experts (*i nostri esperti*) convinced the Americans that it belongs in Italy.

The students were then told that the *krater* is the most famous piece in the entire museum, and that it attracts “thousands of visitors from all over the world.” What the students learned, then, was that a pot of Greek origin was in fact Italian and was brought back to Italy by experts who worked to protect Italy’s patrimony. Such is its importance that it puts Rome on the global stage for cultural tourism. It is noteworthy that of the eight minutes that the guide spent with the students in front of the Euphronios *krater*, five minutes were devoted to an explanation of the mythical scenes presented on it and the remaining three to the story of the *krater's* repatriation.

In truth, the students did not gaze in awe at the Euphronios *krater* or at any of the other objects. They poked each other and giggled, rolled their eyes at the museum guide, and surreptitiously checked their smartphones. On the face of it, then, the guide’s exhortations failed inasmuch as she delivered a one-sided discourse of the state and its agents (the Museum; the state school) to uninterested teenagers. But this was not the only encounter with state discourse of national culture. Through previous and subsequent museum visits, and through textbooks, television, newspapers, and political speeches, Italian youth are exposed constantly to the idea that they have a specific national culture and that it is an *elect* national culture. Their national identity is shaped by this steady drip of cultural discourse. That discourse is all the more effective for percolating rather than flooding. The bored teenagers roll their eyes because they have heard this all before. The galleries of antiquities are familiar and routine, recognized as reliable and enduring rather than as awesome and ephemeral. This is one explanation for why cultural power does not actually look like state power.

If it had been a group of adult visitors, it is possible that the guide's explanations would have been more subtle in discussing the national and ethnic origins of the objects. As it happened, an English-speaking guide led a group of adults through the same galleries later that

morning and I noted that very little was said about the Euphronios *krater's* controversial return from the Met. But the national patrimony narrative was a thread that continued throughout the museum in its Italian-language object labels and display posters, pointedly manifest in a special display entitled “I Predatori dell'Arte... Il Patrimonio Ritrovato” (translated into English as Predators of Art... And the Rediscovered Heritage). It was here that visitors were immersed in the state’s message of cultural obligation.

The display featured artefacts recovered by Italian authorities from the illicit trade network of Giacomo Medici and Robert Hecht. Many items were found in the Geneva Freeport, where they were waiting exportation to private collectors and auction houses in Britain and the United States (Watson & Todeschini 2007). The museum’s press release announced the exhibition as an opportunity for members of the public to familiarize themselves with the extraordinary work undertaken by the Swiss magistrate, the Art Squad, the Guardia di Finanza, and state archaeologists. Two themes dominated the exhibit: maligning *tombaroli*, dealers, collectors, and unscrupulous foreign museums that harbor Italian antiquities without sound provenance (the “predatori”); and collective celebration for the state authorities who stood up to the predators and won back the *beni*.

Italian-speaking visitors were recruited to the Art Squad’s mission at the entrance to the exhibition, where they were wished a good visit and told that the museums’ directors knew that they (the visitors) could be counted upon as “important allies for the care and enrichment of the archaeological patrimony of the Etruscan world” (*importanti alleati per la tutela e la valorizzazione*). The opening panel in the exhibition reminded Italian-speakers of their state's duty towards patrimony, reprinting in bright yellow script a passage from Article 9 of the Italian constitution: “ The Republic promotes the development of culture and technical and scientific

research, as well as care for the natural treasures and the historic and artistic patrimony of the nation. This text did not appear on the English-language panels, signaling an inconsistency in the narrative that continued throughout the exhibit. Italian-language readers were encouraged to identify with the objects and institutions through the first person plural pronoun and frequent invocations of national pride. English readers were given a more detached and scholarly description of the objects and their recent mistreatment.

The recovered objects, mostly Etruscan and Greek in origin, were narrativized as members of the family. Their recovery from foreign museums was a homecoming: they had been on a long and "involuntary" *giro del mondo* (world tour) which ended "fortunatamente, dove era iniziato" (where it was begun). A bronze figurine of Heracles had "returned home to Italy, where he belongs" (but in the Italian, *da dove proviene* [where he comes from]). These objects had been victimized by the protagonists of the black market in antiquities, but above all by foreign museums. In four separate panels, foreign institutions' transgressions were laid bare:

Many museums were involved, from the largest and best-known museums of Europe and America to small university museums.

As examples, the information panel named only American offenders: the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Princeton's University Museum of Art, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the John Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles. In a sentiment that would be repeated three times in the one-room exhibit, readers were told that the corrupt American institutions had "the tactical advantage in the illicit antiquities trade" (my translation): The economic resources at their disposal meant that they had been allowed to purchase Italian antiquities for decades with impunity.

In the face of the American museums' outsized financial capital, Italian institutions were presented as taking the moral high ground. A series of iPad-sized screens were installed amidst the glass cases, showing film clips and still photos from the *missione* to recover the lost artifacts. In a sequence of photos, TPC agents were shown in dress uniform inspecting vandalized sites. Sometimes they were shown alongside plainclothes Finanziari (agents of the Guardia di Finanza) or archaeologists in white lab coats. Other photos presented TPC agents at press conferences with recovered items on the tables in front of them. The accompanying text made clear what it was they were up against. Although looting and heritage crimes occur throughout the world, "it is our country that is most exposed to the raid on cultural patrimony." The determination and moral investment of the Italian authorities accounted for the safe return of the purloined antiquities, overcoming foreign economic power and looters' depravities.

#### Case Study 2: Carabinieri as Curators

A key trope in the state's rhetoric about stolen artifacts is that the objects have lost their scientific context and are thus of diminished value to archaeologists. *Opere decontestualizzate* or decontextualized objects are "mute," according to a museum exhibition devoted to the Guardia di Finanza's achievements in recovering stolen cultural goods. "Works outside of their context cannot give the scientific data necessary to reconstruct their usage in their original sites. 'Mute' artifacts [*opere*], therefore, are gagged [*opere con il bavaglio*], denied the opportunity to tell us their story, or to transmit the message they would have been able to bear had they been discovered by archaeologists in the course of scientific excavation. This is irreparable

damage!”<sup>60</sup> Mute and silenced, the objects are “pretty to look at [*considerevole bellezza*] but ultimately just banal furnishings.”<sup>61</sup>

The process of repatriating a cultural object to the Italian nation involves the creation of a new context for the object. Once it has been established that a recovered good has lost its scientific context – and this notion is clearly enforced by the repetitive force of the *decontestualizzate* refrain – then there is the opportunity to place the good in a national context. This is done through the procedures of archaeology and museum conservation, in the way that cultural objects are accessioned, classified, preserved, and displayed. It is done, too, through the rhetoric, symbols, and performance of state agencies including the Guardia di Finanza, Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale, and the Polizia di Stato. Museum exhibitions devoted to recovered cultural treasure present an ideal location in which to study the interface of archaeology, national ideology, and state power.

To see how this works, I offer four examples of objects that were recovered by one of Italy’s culturally-engaged police forces and processed as *reperti recuperi* or recovered artifacts. My interest here is in the category of *reperti recuperi* and the way it is treated as a category of cultural object. Objects in this category lack the institutional capacity of objects that were discovered through sanctioned archaeological excavations. Because they lack the scientific information that would link them to a specific time and place of use and manufacture, they take on a different institutional capacity as symbols of state power and national control of cultural resources (with the idea that culture is a resource itself assiduously constructed).

---

<sup>60</sup> Rossi, M. 2010. L’Archeologia ferita. Opere con il bavaglio. In “Dal Sepolcro al Museo: Storie di saccheggi e recuperi. La Guardia di Finanza a tutela dell’Archeologia,” pp. 79-81.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

How is the category of the recovered artifact promulgated? This happens primarily in the rhetorical space of museums and their pedagogical apparatus: didactic display boards, audio guides, and object labels that present information about recovered objects' disappearance, rediscovery, and (sometimes) the journey between those events. The discourse of recovered treasure does not end outside the museum. It is carried further by news reports, newspaper opinion pieces, and popular television and radio broadcasts about culture (where men such as Umberto Broccoli and Andrea Carandini enjoy status as celebrity archaeologists). But the museum is the legitimating and originating locus of the discourse.

Public museums in Italy hold exhibitions about recovered artifacts with such frequency that one would be hard-pressed not to find one somewhere in the country at any given moment. In the course of my research for this project, public museums in the city of Rome held no fewer than five major exhibits focused on the major themes of *reperiti recuperati*, *reperiti ritornati*, *l'arte rubata*, *tesori perduti*, and *predatori dell'arte*. At the Villa Giulia in Rome, the Guardia di Finanza co-sponsors an exhibit of recovered artifacts once a year. In summer 2008, the Arma dei Carabinieri, Guardia di Finanza and the Polizia di Stato teamed up with the Museo Nazionale di Castel Sant'Angelo in Rome to sponsor an exhibition of recovered artworks. The title of the exhibition was "La Felicità di un Ritorno," translating literally into English as "The Joy of a Return" but also conveying more subtly the sense of felicity (luck) when a lost member of the community comes back. In 2010 the Gipsoteca hosted the exhibit "Dal Sepolcro al Museo. Storie di saccheggi e recuperi" (From Sepulchre to Museum. Stories of looting and recovery), and in 2013 the Museo di Castel Sant'Angelo held another major exhibition entitled "Capolavori dell'Archeologia: Recuperi, Ritrovamenti, Confronti" (Masterworks of Archaeology: Recovered, Regained, Compared). Outside of Rome there are additional opportunities to view museum



shows devoted to recovered cultural goods. In 2013 in Ragusa, Sicily, the Palazzo Zacco offered a free exhibit on the history of *beni culturali* legislation and the use of police force. According to the exhibition Web site, the show comprised 170 ceramic, bronze, and numismatic pieces,

Which, even without context, comprise significant pieces of the cultural identity of Sicily. These artifacts were intercepted by the military units and then ripped from a tragic fate in the illegal market or "archeomafia".<sup>62</sup>

The museum exhibitions are typically accompanied by a full-color catalogue in which objects are presented in photographs and individual labels. For this portion of the research I read eight “lost art” catalogues which ranged in publication date from 2001 to 2013. I also read five catalogues from exhibitions of artifacts and artworks not necessarily recovered by the *forze ordine*.<sup>63</sup> The comparison of the catalogue types was important for establishing differences between them in how their respective objects are narrated.

The catalogue from the 2008 exhibition *La Felicità di un Ritorno* is a good place to start.

The motivation for the exhibition is described as follows:

Browsing through the pages of this catalog and, even more, by visiting the exhibition, one can see clearly how selected goods, recovered for the public benefit, are the most visible result of the passionate commitment and coordinated action of the State in all its forms (*articolazioni*). The stories highlight the stunning range of possible criminal aggression and the high professional qualities necessary to counter them through activities that often cross the national border. (*La Felicità di un ritorno* 2008: 13)

The catalogue is organized according to the police unit that made the recoveries. After the prefatory material there are three main sections: the first one focused on the Polizia di Stato, the second one the Comando Carabinieri's Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale, and the third devoted to

---

<sup>62</sup> “In nome della Legalità: Centinaia di Reperti Reucperati Dalle Forze Dell’Ordine.” [http://livesicilia.it/2013/06/01/reperti-archeologici-sequestrati-una-mostra-a-palazzo-zacco\\_326194/](http://livesicilia.it/2013/06/01/reperti-archeologici-sequestrati-una-mostra-a-palazzo-zacco_326194/)

<sup>63</sup> For a full list of the catalogues consulted, please see the primary resources section of the references section.

the Guardia di Finanza's Gruppo Tutela Patrimonio Archeologico. The overall organizing logic, then, is along the lines of state institutions. In the non-“lost art” catalogues, by comparison, the organizing logic was informed by time periods, object types, and (or) geographic regions.

In *La Felicità di un Ritorno*, catalogue entries contain basic information about each object. On page 104, for example, the reader finds color photographs of a Greek *amphora* (wine-mixing jug) with the following entry:

Red-figure attic [Greek] amphora with Athena and Ares

Beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

Clay, 40 cm high, 18 cm diameter

Recovered by the Guardia di Finanza – Section for the Protection of  
Archaeological Patrimony

This is a representative entry from the catalogue. In addition to the information that is standard in museum catalogue entries – object type, date, composite materials, measurements – objects in the “lost art” catalogues are also attached to the police unit that recovered them. It is significant that every entry in *La Felicità di un Ritorno* featured this information. The same practice was in evidence in other “lost art” catalogues: in *Dal Sepolcro al Museo*, which focuses entirely on the Guardia di Finanza, object entries also included information about when and where the objects were discovered by the Gruppo Tutela Patrimonio Archeologico.

In addition to the basic catalogue entries, *La Felicità di un Ritorno* features a handful of recovery stories about particular objects. This gives each of the three police units the opportunity to highlight their successes, symbolically flexing their muscle as protectors of the nation's cultural patrimony. The Polizia di Stato chose to showcase an 18<sup>th</sup> century manuscript from the Confraternita di S. Maria della Croce. The recovery story runs as follows:

Trafficked [...] during restoration works to the Curia in 2003, the manuscript from 1770 was recovered by personnel from the Postal Police<sup>64</sup> through highly admirable [*encomiabile*] monitoring activities on an on-line auction site, where the manuscript was placed for sale. In addition to this, another 22 ancient books of notable value were recovered. (*La Felicità di un Ritorno*, p. 43)

The text offers explicit praise for the Postal Police and places the manuscript in a broader context of other books recovered by the police rather than in a context of 18<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts, as would be the case in a catalogue that is not primarily focused on lost art. This entry is unusual for its focus on a post-classical object. The majority of the catalogue entries in *La Felicità di un Ritorno* feature objects made before the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD, spanning from the Italic and Etruscan periods (roughly, 8<sup>th</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC) to the late imperial period. More precisely, *La Felicità di un Ritorno* presents 134 entries on recovered artifacts, of which 87 are antiquities (81 of them authentic, 6 of them *falsi* or fakes). The overall focus on and preference for classical antiquity is evident in the section on the Comando Carabinieri per la Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale. The rescue story of a painted ceramic pitcher combines statist and nationalist narratives of power and culture:

The trefoil-lip *oinochoe*, attributed to the Gruppo delle Foglie d'Edera, which operated in Caria (Asia Minor), is an object that exemplifies the typical painterly style of the Greek East. [...] Together with six others vases the object was restored to the Italian state [*allo Stato Italiano*] from the Princeton University Art Museum of New York, following a cultural agreement signed by the Ministry of Culture. This was made possible by the research conducted by the Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio, whose successes demonstrate the susceptibility of such works of art to illicit exportation from our country [*dal nostro Paese*]. (*La Felicità di un Ritorno*, p. 58)

---

<sup>64</sup> The *Polizia postale e delle comunicazioni*, or *Polizia Postale*, is a division of the *Polizia di Stato*. It is tasked with monitoring criminal activity that is carried out through the Internet, postal service, telephone, and other modes of communication technology.

The meaning of the *oinochoe* hinges entirely on its usefulness as a vehicle for the performance of state power. Notwithstanding the object's decidedly non-Italian roots – manufactured in the part of the world that is now Turkey, and produced in an eastern Greek formal style – the pitcher is indissolubly Italian in the logic of contemporary patrimony ideology. It was disinterred from the Italian soil and is, therefore, rightfully a member of the Italian community's national patrimony. The pitcher's rescue story situates the object not in a context of ancient trading, wine consumption, or household activities, but in contemporary international wrangling between the Italian state and powerful foreign museums. The story is fundamentally about the soil. It was because the object was found in Italian soil that the Italian government repossessed it and reclaimed authority over it.

Soil provides a powerful basis for cultural meaning. Anthropologists have documented the cohesive properties of soil, which acts as a source of chthonic identity (Delaney 1991). But while the soil drives cultural law and substantiates state officials' repatriation claims, the soil does not confer citizenship. In Italy, citizenship is governed by the idea of *jus sanguinis* – that is, through blood relation to parents and grandparents who were Italian citizens. That cultural objects are classified as Italian on the basis of originary soil, but people on the basis of blood, draws our attention to the ways in which objects transcend the traditional categorical division of ethnic versus civic nationalism (Brubaker 1992; Zubrzycki 2001). Artifacts are reclaimed from antiquity as constituent elements of the modern Italian nation-state through laws and regulations, as well as through ethnic imaginings about collective history and cultural essence.

That the Italian soil is the natural home for these things comes out poetically in a rescue story told by the Gruppo Tutela Patrimonio Archeologico of the Guardia di Finanza as part of *La Felicità di un Ritorno*. A full-color, two-page spread is given over to the marble portrait head of

Faustina the Elder, who was married to the emperor Antonius Pius and lived in the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The Faustina portrait, according to the rescue story, followed an exciting path from the time of her theft to the rescue action by the Guardia di Finanza:

The marble head of Faustina the Elder [...] was found, complete with draped bust, in August 1960 in the area behind the theater of the Roman colony of *Minturnae*. It was the victim of a daring theft in the night between 8 and 9 June 1961: during a violent thunderstorm it was snatched through a semicircular hole in the wall of the ancient theater [...] stripped from its statue upside down in the ground. Located on the New York antiquities market in November 2007, and identified thanks to the attentive intelligence work of the Gruppo Tutela Patrimonio Archeologico della Guardia di Finanza [...] it was recovered following intense contact between judicial authorities in Rome and the United States. Happily there concluded a diplomatic solution in the controversy, with the re-entry of the artifact into Italy via international courier. The restitution of the work to the site of its provenance marks the return of the Empress into the city that the Antonine dynasty richly adorned with Asian and African marble. (*La Felicità di un Ritorno*, p. 113)

The Faustina rescue story places the marble portrait firmly in the context of cultural politics and diplomacy. The clever, relentless work of the Guardia di Finanza led to its identification and eventual release from American authorities. The repatriation of the object is seamlessly connected with the ancient past: the empress returns rightfully to the city, Rome, which her family aggrandized through public munificence. There is no question, in this story, whether Faustina belongs to Italy. She was “stripped” [*divelta*] of her body amidst a violent storm, details that communicate forcefully the dark circumstances of her trafficking. As with human beings who are trafficked, the marble portrait – here anthropomorphized into a living, breathing person – has a true home to which she had the right to return.

The point is that even without explicit stories of heroic rescue, the objects are nationalized through subtle curatorial and scientific acts. In the museum catalogues, scientific and nationalist narratives flow together. Museum epistemology and legal instruments of

accession are just one piece of the equation. The highly visible participation of the Guardia di Finanza and the Art Squad give added credibility to the museum narratives. All curatorial activities are political. With the support and influence of an elite military-police unit, however, such activities take on a specific political angle: they are nationalist, morally normative, socially divisive, and symbolically regulatory.

### Case Study 3: Reinforcing Looting Discourse through Museum Displays

Museums and other official cultural institutions are also influential sources of information about *tombaroli*. The 2010 exhibit entitled *Dal Sepolcro al Museo: Storie di saccheggi e recuperi* (From the Sepulcher to the Museum: Tales of Looting and Recovery) provides a typical example. The exhibit was set up in the Sala Gipsoteca at the Complesso di Vittoriano, a complex of display spaces associated with the victory monument to Vittorio Emmanuele II in the ancient Roman forum. This is a conspicuous display space, frequented by Italians and foreign tourists alike. In one section, exhibit visitors were told in Italian and in English about the people responsible for the looting:

Who are these [*tombaroli*], these antagonists to scientific archaeology? Who are these violators of ancient ruins [*profanatori di antiche vestigia*], these thieves of history? They are a band of down-and-out wretches [*un esercito di disperati*] living by their wits; spending their time in the fields searching for burials to dig; they walk along the same paths their forefathers walked on; they survive selling what they find and, if they're lucky, adorn themselves and their own women with the same jewels. They are the predators of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a constantly growing group. Hiring young unemployed men and, in recent years, even workers from Eastern Europe, they organize nighttime raids, eluding the police forces. Sometimes they do this in collusion with watchmen [*guardiania*], pouring into the burial chambers and looting as much as they can. [...] Their loot, the treasures of Etruria, will always find an illicit market and is destined to wind up with

parvenus and clients who are as rich as they are unscrupulous, in Italy and abroad and especially China and Japan [...].<sup>65</sup>

What does this text reveal about widespread, shared assumptions about *tombaroli*? First, it shows that *tombaroli* are portrayed as violating the norms of professional excavation practices, thus threatening the attempts by good, sanctioned excavators to document the stratigraphic record. Moreover, *tombaroli* are profaners of ancient sites: by invading tombs they simultaneously desacralize the final resting place of the dead and steal the historical patrimony of their fellow Italians. Describing *tombaroli* as thieves of history contradicts the long-standing view that amateur excavation was a harmless, if irritating, pursuit with no real harm done (Schnapp 1997). As thieves of history, *tombaroli* commit violence against the nation – a “victim” at once abstract and powerfully immanent.

“They are a band [*esercito*] of down-and-out-wretches [*disperati*].” With this characterization, the exhibit’s didactic board imposes a social class identity on *tombaroli* and attacks their moral standing. The word *esercito* can refer to a professional army or a rowdy band. Its usage here is somewhere in between these meanings. On the one hand, *tombaroli* are described as street smart (“live by their wits”) rather than formally schooled, implying a makeshift existence. On the other, they are organized and numerous. They methodically trace paths into archaeologically rich zones to look for more grave goods, and to increase their yield they recruit unemployed young men and “even workers from Eastern Europe” – a politically loaded assertion in the present-day anti-immigration political culture of Rome.

---

<sup>65</sup> From the didactic museum display boards of the 2010 *Dal Sepolcro al Museo* exhibit in the Sala Gipsoteca, Complesso di Vittoriano, Rome. The text is reprinted at: Rossi, M. 2010. L’Archeologia ferita. Opere con il bavaglio. In *Dal Sepolcro al Museo: Storia di saccheggi e recuperi. La Guardia di Finanza a tutela dell’Archeologia*, p. 81. Gangemi Editore.

Above all, the text stresses the greed and lack of scruples of *tombaroli*. They are primarily motivated by profit and personal gain. The suggestion that *tombaroli* actually wear the ancient jewelry that they find or adorn their wives with it is meant to elicit repulsion in the readers. This detail calls to mind Heinrich Schliemann, perhaps the most notorious unauthorized excavator of ancient ruins, who famously photographed his wife wearing gold earrings and necklaces from a Bronze Age burial at Troy (Schliemann 2010 [1875]). However vulgar Schliemann's act, he is now written off on grounds of period ignorance. Today's *tombaroli*, the text suggests, should know better. To hunt for and harbor antiquities for personal indulgence is to cheat the national community and profane the antiquities themselves.

In closing, the text mentions an illicit market and suggests that *tombaroli* are active participants in it. No further definition or description of an illicit market is provided, leaving readers to fill in the gaps with their own impressions of what a black market in antiquities might look like or contain. One recurring trope in this gap filling, as we saw in chapter Five, is the notion that there is a single, coherent market in which goods are exchanged for money and criminal organizations call the shots. Recent work challenges this notion (Adler & Polk 2005; Bowman 2008; Campbell 2013). My interview subjects were not equally prepared to confirm or deny the participation of organized crime in the illicit circulation of antiquities, but nearly all of them said that they had never had entanglements with organized criminal groups and did not know of any practitioners of unauthorized excavation who had. This critical reading of the idealized *tombarolo* will be important to bear in mind when we turn to Italy's most famous tomb robber, a man who briefly rode a wave of popular enthusiasm for stories of cowboy diggers and the treasures they find.



## Conclusion

In the *Museo Ritrovato* (Museum of the Returned), there are clear divisions between Italian and foreign, scientific and amateurish, licit and criminal, good and bad. Tombaroli, the much-maligned unauthorized excavators, have no voice in this space. The power of the museum lies in its ability to name, to represent the social world, to create official stories about objects, and to represent the past. Becoming the only legitimate institutional form for the public enjoyment of national culture imbued the public museum with heightened influence. Museums are not competing with other types of spaces for legitimate narration of historical materials because there are no other legitimate spaces.

Hooper-Greenhill argued that the objective of the 19<sup>th</sup> century British museum was “to place the peoples of the world in relationships of domination and subservience” (Hooper-Greenhill 1992: 24). The blunt colonial message that obtained in 19<sup>th</sup> century museums has been softened by contemporary sensibilities about cultural heritage and diversity. Nevertheless, using antiquities to illustrate the evils of looting and the fine work of state agencies simply creates an updated schema of relationships of domination and subservience. The *museo ritrovato* is a space in which the incoherence of three millennia of cultural objects is ordered according to cultural power. Objects take their place as signifiers of specific modes of authority: scientific, juridical, historical, and criminological. In this space, the aesthetic properties of the objects count insofar as their uniqueness raises the value of the state agencies’ “wins.” The aim of the *museo ritrovato* is to display returned objects in such a way as to make them part of the *patria*. Once this has been achieved, this new relationship between people and objects can be built upon to legitimate the state-archaeology collaboration, to educate the public, and to stigmatize and dominate unauthorized excavators and collectors.

## CHAPTER 5

### Tomb Robbers and the Margins of National Culture

#### *Tombaroli* and Cultural Power: Abstractions and Praxis

Excuse me, but you are foreign so you do not understand everything about how it works here. When you ask me if my uncle sold the artifacts [that he dug up] you insult him. He was a collector (*collezionista*). He admired his objects [*ha tenuto in pregio i reperti*]. You are asking about the *tombaroli*. They sell [artifacts] for money. That is the main distinction. My uncle was not a *tombarolo*. He never sold anything. – (Domenico, 57 years old. Bakery and café owner in Monti. Interviewed July 2012.)

As suggested by Domenico's prickly response to my question about the nature of his uncle's digging and collecting habit, the term "tombarolo" merits special consideration. The *Dizionario Etimologico della Lingua Italiana* identifies *tombarolo* as slang and defines it as "a thief who violates ancient tombs, which are protected by law, to steal objects for sale to collectors."

*Tombarolo* is related to a class of Italian words ending in –aiolo. The suffix is associated with crafting or making. "Vignaiolo," for example, is a winemaker, and an "armaiolo" is a gunsmith. The sense of making is not limited to respectable professions, however. A "borsaiolo" is not a purse-maker but rather a pickpocket – literally, someone who makes something (a profit) from someone else's pocket or purse. A "cetriolo" is the slang term for a fool (the word also means "cucumber"), and a "mariolo" is a sly or rascally person. While –aiolo is the preferred spelling in mainstream Italian, it varies by region and can turn up as –arolo in central and southern Italian written and spoken speech. The –arolo ending in "tombarolo" is why linguists suggest that the word emerged from central-southern Italian dialect. Looking at the class of words in –aiolo or –

rolo is important because it helps to give “tombarolo” a socio-linguistic placement. These are words linked with mischief and crafting. The *vignaiolo* miraculously transforms grapes into alcohol, and the *tombarolo* conjures treasure from tombs.

What we see from popular stereotypes and sociolinguistic analysis, then, is that the word *tombarolo* is best thought of not as a generic looter, but rather as a particular category of social actor who is associated with a specific area (central and southern Italy) and is by turns crafty and bumbling, slick and coarse. Finding and raiding tombs, and turning their wreckage into treasure, requires a mix of rural esprit and outdoorsy confidence. In the mass media and in popular entertainment, tomb robbers are swashbuckling, gritty heroes with a fierce devotion to archaeological objects and a daring insouciance to social conventions. Prominent examples are Indiana Jones and Lara Croft – both of whose films, books, and video games have been translated from English to Italian and enjoy widespread followings in Italy.<sup>66</sup>

Indiana Jones can never be considered a *tombarolo*, however. He is non-Italian, highly educated, and heroic. (He is also a fictional character, but in the interest of theorization I will bracket that fact.) Indy is humorous but is not a clown. He fights for noble causes and uses wit and intelligence to win. Above all he cares very much about the artifacts. *Tombaroli*, as they are understood in Italian society, are the opposite of Indiana Jones. For this reason, “tomb robber” and “tomb raider” are unhelpful translations of *tombarolo* because they call to mind the virtues and derring-do of Hollywood archaeologists.<sup>67</sup> *Tombarolo* needs to be understood in an Italian socio-historical context because it is constructed by the state for a specific purpose.

---

<sup>66</sup> See, for example, the Italian-language fan forum *Indy-World*, dedicated to “il protagonista il Dr. Jones” and his “world of archaeological adventures.” [Freeforum.leonardo.it/f/84709/Indiana-Jones-Italian-fan-forum/forum.aspx](http://Freeforum.leonardo.it/f/84709/Indiana-Jones-Italian-fan-forum/forum.aspx). For Lara Croft: [www.tombraideritalia.it](http://www.tombraideritalia.it).

<sup>67</sup> For this reason, I avoid these English phrases except for when I quote others who use them (in which case I make clear that the words are theirs).

One of the earliest known print appearances of the word “tombarolo” comes from a 1965 newspaper article about five men who were accused of stealing objects from an archaeological site in Tarquinia (*Il Tempo* May 23, 1965). The brief article recounts the charges against the men and discloses the sentences of the convicted. The episode warrants less page space than the adjacent discussions of society weddings and a new auto show. Just four years later, however, the Art Squad was founded on the premise that *tombaroli* posed a deadly threat to the national community by destroying its cultural legacy.

Two main tasks drive this chapter. The first is to show what unauthorized excavation consists of, who participates in it, and how it configures in local practices of cultural meaning-making. I begin this task this by unpacking the social construct of the *tombarolo* as it appears in popular media and state discourse. Doing so reveals the institutional interests and cultural logic that sustain the *tombarolo* as a category of despised social actor. I then link those interests and logic with my fieldwork findings from interviews with unauthorized excavators.

The second task is to understand the specter of the *tombarolo* in relation to social memory and to cultural heritage. In this vein, I show how unauthorized excavators of antiquities fall somewhere between heritage (a branch of government management) and social memory (a local-level, organic, everyday process of reckoning with the past). I ask what role domestic policing plays in sustaining cultural power, and argue that through their engagements with antiquities, unauthorized excavators understand themselves in relation to the state.

State officials, as we learned in Chapter Three, are unambiguous on this point: excavating without permits or official permission from local archaeological superintendents is illegal and subject to prosecution. On the ground, however, the situation is more complicated. Unauthorized excavation includes a range of practices and structural arrangements. The cartoonish image of

organized gangs of diggers and smugglers, those bogeymen of the scholarly literature on looting, is of limited help in understanding my subjects' entanglements with antiquities. The widely used terms "clandestine excavating" (*scavi clandestini*) and "exploitative excavating" (*scavi abusivi*), moreover, are insufficient to explain unauthorized diggers' motives, values, and perceptions of meaning. A more nuanced, bottom-up study of context and non-state perspectives is required to analyze this sphere of activity and how it both supports and confounds state-level cultural power.

### **Methodological Orientations: Spaces of Inquiry and Modes of Interface**

In the first chapter I presented my research methods, ethical considerations, and institutional planning with respect to my interviews and archival work. Here I discuss in greater detail the two sites in which I conducted interviews with unauthorized excavators, and what implications the sites have for the scope of my argument and the reach of my conclusions. I based myself in two primary locations for the interviews: Rome (Termini/Monti neighborhoods) and Vescovado di Murlo (Tuscany). Prior to selecting these specific sites, I decided to limit my fieldwork to central Italy. This regional limitation stemmed from logistical and intellectual concerns.

Logistically, I needed to work in a community that was within a day's train journey from Rome, where I had rented a room and stored my field notes and personal belongings. The working-class neighborhoods of Termini and Monti were the focus of my interview work in Rome. I chose them precisely because they skirt the most impressive and cultivated archaeological zone in Rome (the Colosseum—Forum of Trajan—Foro Romano archipelago) and because I knew from my review of the secondary literature that Termini and Monti are vibrant pockets of local cultural identity in the heart of the nation's capital (Herzfeld 2009).

In a classic anthropological field study scenario, I would have lived in a community for a year in order to observe and absorb the rhythms of daily life slowly and inductively. My personal

circumstances did not allow for a full year of field work, so I adapted the method of active interviewing by undertaking four summertime research stays (2010, 2011, 2012, 2013) with three additional, shorter visits in autumn 2012, when I was a visiting fellow at Oxford University and divided my time between England and Italy. A final logistical concern, which was also an intellectual one, was proximity to archaeologically rich zones. Locating myself in communities near to known archaeological sites increased my chances of finding people who participated in unauthorized excavation as well as people who did not but who were familiar enough with the issue that they had opinions and insights to share.

Intellectually, I prioritized research sites that were similar to each other in terms of both material profile and cultural-institutional contexts. Similar material profiles allowed me to control for valuation differences across the artifactual findings. In comparing subjects' narratives of artifacts and the meaning they made of them, I wanted to avoid the cultural equivalent of apples to oranges. Were I to set up shop in Apulia (the "heel" of the Italian boot) and interview unauthorized excavators of Apulian artifacts, I would undoubtedly find interesting differences in how unauthorized excavators operate. But I would also have to separate out the strands of intellectual and social history that have consistently treated Apulian wares as non-Italian and undervalued (to speak nothing of the formal market for antiquities, in which Apulian wares have never been as sought after as Etruscan or Roman artifacts) (Ceserani 2012). Locating myself in two central Italian sites, on the other hand, would still offer object variation – temporally, culturally, and materially – but also ensure important contextual similarities across the comparisons. One contextual factor that mattered greatly was institutional jurisdiction. At an early stage of my project, a more senior colleague – an expert in state archaeological policy – warned me that the regional offices of the Art Squad and the archaeological superintendents have

quite different bureaucratic personalities. Because my primary interest is in national culture, and in cultural power as state construct, I wanted to be able to establish bureaucratic continuity to the extent possible and drill deep into that space to identify and analyze variations therein. Regional variations in the enforcement of national antiquities laws is a fascinating issue and could well provide important insights into the instability of cultural power. But pursuing that analytical line systematically was beyond the scope of my work.

### **Selecting Rome and Vescovado: Affordances and Limitations**

In 2010 and 2011 I visited three communities located near excavation sites. One was in Lazio, one in Umbria, and the third in Tuscany. At each visit I was attached to an archaeological team, conducting fieldwork for my project on team dynamics in excavation (published as “Seeing the Unseen” in *Qualitative Sociology* in 2013). During my time in each locale, I explored the nearby community to assess its feasibility as an interview site. Each of them had the logistical and contextual features I sought, but only the site in Tuscany had the combination of population size and community structure that would enable me to gain access to locals without compromising the privacy of my subjects or the relationships between the archaeology teams and the surrounding communities. The Umbrian site, for example, was inflected with serious tensions between the dig team administrators and local residents. Even though my time with that particular team was limited to one summer, my having been affiliated with it at all was, I soon understood, a permanent blight on my personal standing. My friendly attempts at conversations with residents of the nearest village went nowhere. In one memorable episode, my reluctant interlocutor hurried me out of her shop by saying, “Your [dig team’s] van is leaving and if you miss it you’ll be devoured” (literally, *ti sbraneranno* or “they’ll claw you to pieces” – a cheeky

reference to the aggressive stray dogs who picked through the rubbish bins but also, I couldn't help but think, a warning to me to stop nosing around in locals' affairs).

The Lazio site, on the other hand, hummed along with positive relationships between the dig team and the locals. The challenge there was that the "local" was difficult to pin down. The dig team lived in a hotel in a small city (population 21,000 as of 2013) whose inhabitants were dispersed throughout the main commercial districts and into the surrounding countryside. The dig site itself was several miles from that city. Since my subject recruitment method prohibited door-to-door canvassing and snowball sampling, this setting presented serious obstacles.

In Vescovado di Murlo (population 2,392 as of 2013<sup>68</sup>) I found an accessible social environment and a population sufficiently sized that I could gain insight into local attitudes toward nationalism, scofflaws, and institutional imperfections. This is what Herzfeld describes as *cultural intimacy*: "the recognition of those aspects of a cultural identity that are considered a source of external embarrassment but that nevertheless provide insiders with their assurance of common sociality..." (Herzfeld 2004 [1997]: 3). Cultural intimacy, explains Herzfeld, reveals "creative dissent," which in turn can help us to understand how people "negotiate the terrain of social identity and daily life in the [...] modern nation-state, and how they can be fiercely patriotic and just as fiercely rebellious at the same time" (91).

My conversations and observations in Vescovado revealed several sources of collective embarrassment. One example is the story, now seventy years old, of how local men executed a stray German paratrooper near the end of the Second World War but later, despite fierce local loyalty to the Communists, decided to pay for the upkeep of his grave and pay for his widow to travel there from Germany. That story, I was told several times, was not to be read as an

---

<sup>68</sup> Source: [istat.it](http://istat.it) (data downloaded March 27, 2014)



indication of local residents' fickleness or secret infatuation with neo-Fascism. On the contrary, the tending of the grave was consistent with locals' prioritizing humane relationships and respecting family ties over blind obeisance to abstractions including Party loyalty and national narratives. This is the power of cultural intimacy: the stories, jokes, customs, and myths that have resonance among locals offer insight into how individuals make sense of the nation-state as members of small communities rather than as an aggregated citizenry.

The flip side of the methodological coin is that my data do not address some key areas of concern for cultural policy scholars and economists of the black market in art. I do not provide the sort of statistically representative data set that would be needed to plot a network analysis of how unauthorized excavators in different parts of Italy are connected through nodes of trade and fencing (Campbell 2013; Proulx 2013). I did not spend time with middlemen or traffickers (so far as I know), so I cannot offer conclusive evidence for who the middlemen are or how they locate and interact with the primary diggers. The sorts of data collecting required for such analyses are painstaking, ongoing, and as-yet unfinished (Marín-Aguilera 2012). My intellectual commitment is to the study of cultural power as a form of state power. Because of this, my method is fundamentally inductive rather than deductive: I did not begin with the assumption that looting and trafficking are major problems that require regimes of punishment and policing to be controlled. I began instead with an interest in how antiquities configure in everyday Italians' relations with the state. It is, as such, no coincidence that my data do not sustain definitive statements on the "problem" of looting. My analysis unpacks the construction of that very problem, and so avoids reifying the standard categories of social actors.

## **Morality and Identity: The status of unauthorized excavators**

The walls of the Café Gramsci in Vescovado are covered with local grandees. Framed photos show the local football club in action over the years, smiling couples at 1950s wedding celebrations, and a few faded images of local grandees now deceased. By far the largest number of the photos is given over to Vescovado's proud archaeological profile. Here, with the café lights beaming and the late afternoon clientele gathering for coffee, *gelato*, and Orangina, 61-year-old Jacopo guided me through the photos with the gentle Italian used by tour guides for their foreign guests:

**Jacopo:** Look here, [it's] Gianluca and Vincenzo, they were the first to find the foundations of the building. It was very, very big. Lots of hard work.

**FRG:** When was that?

**Jacopo:** Forty years ago? No, must be more than that. Professor Philips was the director. [gesturing at the photos] What you see here, look, all of this, Poggio Civitate, the principal city of the Etruscans... *We* uncovered it, with tremendous effort (*con molto sforzo*).

**FRG:** Do you miss the excavation project?

**Jacopo** (shrugs): Who cares? (*Chi se ne frega?*) I don't need an excavation to excavate.

As with other residents of this small town 20 kilometers outside of Siena, Jacopo excavates and collects artifacts without official authorization.

Jacopo's story hits on several major themes that recurred throughout my discussions with unauthorized diggers: *expertise*, *local identity*, and *structural ambiguity*. First, by insisting that long-time Vescovado residents Gianluca and Vincenzo discovered the foundations of what turned out to be a major find (the Archaic residence complex at Poggio Civitate) and pointing to their collective labor as an important resource to the project, Jacopo highlighted a tension

between local and Outsider forms of expertise. Not incidentally, “sforzo,” the word that he used to describe his and his friends’ contribution to the dig, means intense mental concentration as well as physical effort. Second, When Jacopo drew out his answer to my question about how long ago the discovery happened, he was reminding me that Vescovado men have experience that significantly predates the arrival of foreign archaeology students and visitors (like me) at the site. The fact of his growing up near the excavation site, gaining familiarity and sensorial mastery of the area even before it became an official dig site, conferred in him natal affinity, a key form of credibility in knowledge- and cultural-production. This natal affinity, borne out by his dexterity with dig sites and artifacts, in turn was a core component of Jacopo’s local identity.

Finally, Jacopo’s startling shift from recounting licit excavation work on the formal team to hinting at his illicit forays into dig sites reveals multiple points of contact with artifacts and archaeological remains. As I learned from my interviews, it is common for unauthorized excavators to move between licit and illicit forms of digging. This in itself was not surprising. Sociologists who study socially deviant behaviors stress that law-breaking is only one aspect of their subjects’ varied lives (which are often fundamentally normatively compliant) (e.g., Becker 1963 on secret deviance). What was surprising was the intensity of my subjects’ coming to terms with structural ambiguity – here defined as individuals’ uncertainties about where they stand with respect to state institutions and nationhood idioms. Structural ambiguity, as I explain below, is a key concept for understanding how practitioners of unauthorized excavation think about the state and imagine themselves into (or out of) it.

In an earlier iteration of this project, I argued that unauthorized diggers should be understood as operating at the margins of Italian society (Rose-Greenland 2012). At that time my interest lay primarily in the legal and institutional constraints imposed upon archaeological

excavation – constraints that carved out a narrow space for authorized, licit work and denounced all excavation outside of this space as illicit, amateurish, anti-Italian and anti-cultural. While those legal and institutional constraints remain unchanged, my continued fieldwork has altered my perspective on the nature of the space outside of authorized digging. Jacopo, a white, middle-aged, Catholic man who owns his own home in a respectable neighborhood in Vescovado, is not socially marginalized in the way that a Roma worker or Senegalese immigrant is (Clough Marinaro 2012, 2014; Forgacs 2014). Instead, Jacopo is marginalized within the specific field of cultural production. His ways of digging and collecting artifacts are stigmatized in mainstream publications and scholarly discussions. The evidence from my interviews with unauthorized excavators suggests that the core sociological concepts of “marginalized” and “deviance” are of use to this empirical space, but first require critical re-thinking. As indicated by my subjects’ stories, in the space of archaeological excavation and artifact evaluation – a vast and variegated sphere of activity – the boundaries between licit and illicit, local and national, honorable and dishonorable are porous and continually revisited.

Durkheim wrote that deviance is an essential feature of social life. Deviance, and the punishment that it induces, helpfully reminds members of the social body what is expected of them and the penalties they face if they break the rules. Durkheim’s framing is broadly helpful for studying Italy as cultural power, and is most evident in my discussion of the Art Squad’s approach to dealing with tomb robbers and black market dealers in antiquities. But, as we will see, Durkheim’s focus on the functional qualities of social deviance glosses the *meaning* of deviance. The illicit diggers and collectors with whom I spoke situated their activities in a rich folkloric context in which their passion for digging and collecting antiquities feeds social memory. In so doing, they contravene the rules and regulations of heritage, or the state’s

ordering of culture. True connoisseurship, according to my informants, is fuelled by a love of objects and a curiosity about one's own local past. Respectable unauthorized excavators not only give each other a pass on deviating from official rules and regulations, they *expect* each other to do so long as they adhere to certain internal rules (such as preserving the dignity of the dig site by replacing the earth over the pits). Rather than conceptualizing unauthorized excavators as deviants from cultural heritage practices, I treat them as contributors to local, social memory.

My intention, to be sure, is neither to romanticize unauthorized excavators nor defend their practices. As a trained archaeologist and someone who believes that stratigraphic information is crucial for historical study, I am sickened by the destruction of evidence and objects that accompanies much illicit digging. But after four summers' worth of field work and many seasons' more reading and thinking about this issue, I know with certainty that people who excavate illicitly do so for a variety of reasons and with a range of tools, knowledge, and goals. The label "tomb robber" unhelpfully compresses an assortment of social stereotypes – about southern Italians, rural Italians, and those who are working class or lack advanced degrees – into a single caricature. This caricature, in turn, is grist for the mill when state actors rail against so-called cultural criminals, who are also referred to as the Italian nation's "scourge." I will critically assess the stock character of the tomb robber while also offering a frank appraisal of what impact illicit digging has on archaeological sites and artifacts. With this subject, too, I consider what it actually means for the state to try to rule culture over a 116,000 square mile landmass in which there are millions of antiquities and ruins above ground, and potentially as many more still in the soil. What is let go? And can cultural power reconcile heritage (a management practice) with social memory (a cultural practice)?

Fundamentally, Jacopo's story highlights a core tension in the ideology of national culture. That ideology holds up artifacts and archaeological structures as the inheritance of the people, held in trust by the state. Artifacts are thus symbolic property of a symbolic construct ("the people"), but not intended for use or intimate ownership by actual individuals. This tension is important to the study of cultural power because it offers insight into how antiquities shape people's understandings of and feelings about the state.

National culture, I argued in the first chapter, is produced when present-day actors select sites, objects, and practices from an imagined past, assert them as an inheritance (patrimony), and use laws and official discourse to oblige citizens to protect those objects for an imagined future nation-state community (Berezin 1997; Herzfeld 2004; Tunbridge & Ashworth 1996). Sociologists offer different ways to think about the associated aspects of this process. Steinmetz asserts that national culture is constantly in flux; it is never "formed" once and for all (Steinmetz 1999: 9). This means that national culture is negotiated and contested by different actors and social institutions. But negotiation is rarely an egalitarian project. State officials and state-endorsed experts have the upper hand; they set the rules of the game by narrating the issues and mooting contentious alternatives. States' use of symbolic power makes state involvement in intimate, sacred processes – births, marriages, deaths, rites of passage, naming, sacrifices – standardized and bureaucratized (Loveman 2005). Sociologists of state power, then, see cultural objects and practices as resources that can enhance a state's power if successfully managed.

Extending my analysis of cultural power, I demonstrate in this chapter how domestic policing of unauthorized excavation bolsters this particular form of power. Stigmatizing unauthorized excavators and forcing them outside the parameters of acceptable science reinforces official discourses about antiquities and their meaning in the national community. But

there is more at play here than just “cracking down on crooks.” Unauthorized excavators are publicly lambasted but quietly tolerated. My ethnographic data reveal the cracks in the carapace of cultural power, and I use these discontinuities to analyze the stakes of cultural power.

### **Omero Bordo and Ideal Deviance: The *Tombarolo* as Despised Cultural Actor**

Two real-life *tombaroli*, Omero Bordo and Pietro Casasanta, rose to prominence in the 1990s through Italian television and popular magazines. For a while, they were the darlings of television talk shows, magazine articles, and trade books. Bordo used his earnings to build Etruscopolis, a reconstructed “city of the dead” that was celebrated (and lampooned) as Etruscan Disneyland.

Bordo’s trajectory from imprisonment and disrepute through media fame and fortune, then back to intellectual discredit and social marginalization, sheds light on the workings of cultural power on the ground. Bordo was lifted to prominence because his exploits struck a nerve with Italians’ longstanding interest in and instinctive sympathy for a specific type of marginalized figure: the cultural entrepreneur, like bandits and political protestors, whose basic credentials as a member of the Italian community allow him or her to push against and play with institutional rules (Della Porta & Zamponi 2013; Hobsbawm 1969). While Bordo enjoyed a brief wave of popular interest, his renown was always destined for infamy because the construct of the *tombarolo* is firmly linked with pervasive class and regional stereotypes. Bordo’s critics effectively exploited these stereotypes and reinforced the shamefulness of the *tombarolo* label.

Bordo was born in 1943, a turning point in the war as American soldiers forced German forces to retreat from Italy. The difficulties endured by rural Italians haunt Bordo’s recollection of his early years. It was, he says, a period of perilous challenges for rural residents, during which civilians still died regularly from bombs, hunger, and sickness. As a toddler he was sent to

his aunt's house at Montarozzi, near the heartland of ancient Etruria. This experience spawned his fascination with antiquity. Reflecting on his first youthful forays into Etruscan tombs Bordo hits on two themes, somatism and emotions, which are integral to his defense of unauthorized digging. Exploring tombs and disinterring objects felt completely natural: "As a child I began to breathe the very air and feel the same energy as the ancient rulers and priests, warriors and ordinary people, children of the Tyrrhenians who were still shrouded in mystery." His youthful explorations eventually paid off. At the age of sixteen Bordo was approached by a man in a bar who asked whether Bordo might be able to bring him Etruscan collectibles. Bordo assented and, with a friend, returned the next day with a haul of pottery that earned them 350,000 Lire (Cecchelin 1987: 23-4). This was an enormous sum for a rural boy. It was Bordo's first inkling that the objects he loved held monetary, not just sentimental, value.

In 1975 Bordo was arrested and prosecuted for selling fake antiquities, which he made in his home and passed off as authentic. He was indignant: "Fundamentally, what had I done wrong?" he asked rhetorically in his biography. Bordo argued that he made replicas of Etruscan wares and that if his buyers could not discern the difference between his productions and the ancient versions then it was "their fault." The case worked its way through the courts for months, a period Bordo refers to as "my odyssey," a classical reference that also points to the origins of his name (Omero is the Italian form of Homer) (Cecchelin 1987: 166). It was in the prison at Civitavecchia that Bordo began to make Etruscan objects with support from the prison officials, this time without passing them off as fakes. It was sponsored as a model activity for the other inmates. This was, he wrote, a means of transforming his relationship with Etruscan heritage. After his release from prison Bordo began working full-time on his Etruscan ceramic vessels. He was a new man: "The troubled figure of the ex-tombarolo, the profaner of tombs (*il profanatore*



*di tombe*), had left that persona for that of the artist, the man who has managed to shake off the curse (*dosso la maledizione*) of poverty and indignity.”

Bordo's ceramic productions first attracted the notice of international artists in the early 1980s, and became a sensation in Italy in the following decade. He joined the cast of an Italian TV variety show in the 1980s, and by the 1990s had earned sufficient money to realize his dream of building a faithful reconstruction of an Etruscan town. Etruscopolis was inspired by his sustained contact with “the underground Etruscan world.” The faithful reconstruction of Etruscan tombs would serve not just as a project of scholarly study. It would be an act of reparation for the “violations” that he had committed on the sacred area of his ancestors.<sup>69</sup> Omero saw himself as “the last of the Etruscans”.

Etruscopolis opened in 1997. In the United States, newspapers heralded the founding of “Etruscan Disneyland.” In Italy, media outlets reported with a mix of humor and fascination the painstakingly reconstructed “city of the dead” in Tuscany. Bordo’s fame grew. But a close reading of the media records suggest that popular reception of Etruscopolis was complicated. Its eventual demise was embedded in the public’s fundamental distrust of fakes and of collectors stigmatized by the *tombarolo* label. Newspapers stressed Bordo’s lack of formal expertise. *La Stampa* pulled no punches:

No, he doesn’t seem at all like Indiana Jones, this predator of ancient art: he has the thick, heavy figure of a man who likes a good meal, a crafty look [and] a slight sleepiness to his eyes. (*La Stampa*, August 17, 1990)

---

<sup>69</sup> Omero Bordo, “La mia vita,” p. 4 Section “1993/1996.” Online autobiography, <http://www.ultimoetrusco.it/biografia-int/testo.htm>. Accessed 16 November 2012.

Bordo's physical deficiencies were compounded by his supposed intellectual shortcomings. The same article disclosed that he had "no idea" how much to charge visitors after the initial three-month free admission period, which was subsidized by the regional government. He was quoted as bragging about the independent nature of the venture. "I didn't receive a dime of government money. I built this all by myself." Both statements point to a character flaw that is particularly damning in the Italian context: aggressive independence. To an American readership, Bordo's story fits comfortably into the narrative of the self-made man. In Italy, by contrast, this form of independence borders on insolence and signals a core vice in collective self-characterization in Italy (Patriarca 2010). Bordo's failure to collaborate with recognized authorities, such as archaeologists, museum curators or state authorities, additionally signals his lack of understanding of how the cultural "system" works. Etruscopolis was closed during my 2012 fieldwork period and is not scheduled to reopen.<sup>70</sup>

### **Delegitimizing Bordo: The scholarly discourse in action**

Professional archaeologists provided their own criticisms of Bordo. Dr. Maria Gabriella Scapatucci, Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici dell'Etruria meridionale, was interviewed by the Associated Press about the impact of Etruscopolis on scholarly research into and popular appreciation of the ancient Etruscans. Dr. Scapatucci was unimpressed: "Omero Bordo is a man of low education (*scarsa cultura*) and is not an expert. With this business [Etruscopolis] he wants

---

<sup>70</sup> I called the Etruscopolis information line in November 2012, hoping to schedule an interview with Bordo. The man who answered the phone did not identify himself as Bordo but spoke with a voice strikingly similar to the one I'd heard from Bordo in television interviews. The man explained that Bordo was unavailable for interviews and that if I wanted to visit Etruscopolis I would need to return the following summer. I attempted to visit in July 2013 and was told that Etruscopolis was closed indefinitely.

to ingratiate himself to the authorities after many years of pillaging (*depredato*) many tombs.”<sup>71</sup>

Scapaticci's comment hits on two recurrent themes. The first is that formal education is correlated with expertise. This theme is especially resilient in archaeology, a discipline that has struggled to separate experts from amateurs for more than a century. We encounter it again in the comments of prominent Etruscologist Lorella Maneschi, who told the daily newspaper *Corriere della Sera* that Bordo's recreated tombs have “no scientific value whatsoever.”<sup>72</sup>

Scapaticci's characterization of Bordo as poorly educated is part of the larger project of creating a specific persona for *tombaroli*. “*Scarsa cultura*” means not just poorly educated but poorly acculturated. This touches on a key trope: the *tombarolo* as coarse and socially unformed. Problematically, the *tombarolo* encompasses the classic yin-yang of Italians' negative self-characterizing: *furbo* and *fesso*. Where *furbo* means cunning and shrewd, *fesso* means foolish. Bordo was deliberately showcased as a bit of both: shrewd enough to cash in on Italy's cultural awakening to Etruscans, but not so shrewd that he knew how much to charge his visitors; sufficiently cunning to pass off his own Etruscan pots as authentic, but also woefully inept.

Absent from the scholarly critique of Omero Bordo was the possibility that his efforts point to fissures in the state's apparatus of cultural authority. Maneschi's criticism of Etruscopolis as having “no scientific merit” presumed the supremacy of science over other schemes of knowledge-production. Bordo is not a professional archaeologist and had no obligation to uphold the institutionalized goals of archaeology. Bordo's claim that he was the last

---

<sup>71</sup> “Grave Robber creates an Etruscan Theme Park,” by Frances D’Emilio for the *Los Angeles Times* Nov. 2, 1997. <http://articles.latimes.com/1997/nov/02/news/mn-49350> (accessed 6/20/13).

<sup>72</sup> Marianna, A. 4 March 2001. “L’ Etrusco strega ancora. Ricostruzioni “fedelmente false”: “Cosi’ facciamo rivivere la storia.” *Corriere della Sera*, p. 57.

of the Etruscans was skeptically reported by journalists and knowingly presented as evidence of his delusion. Standing outside of big-C culture, the disreputable *tombarolo* bumbles his way down the path to jail time, public ridicule, and such misuses of culture as “Etruscan Disneyland.”

### **Rules of the Game: The Linguistic and Intellectual Parameters of Looting Discourse**

No, there is no difference. A looter (*saccheggiatore*) and a *tombarolo* are both thieves. The *tombarolo* is properly associated with archaeology. But practically speaking, a looter is a looter. (Prof. Rita Paris, director of the Palazzo Massimo museum in Rome. Interviewed in Rome, July 2013.)

Yes, of course [there is a distinction]. The *tombarolo* excavates objects and sells them through a system. *Saccheggiatori*, on the other hand, work alone. They don't have contacts. They don't have a plan. They just rip things out [from the ground] and run. (“Massimo,” Art Squad agent. Interviewed on background, Rome, June 2012.)

The English word “looting” derives from the Hindu word *lut*, which means “steals” or “pillage.” In common parlance and much academic work, “looting” is applied to a range of instances in which people take things illegally, whether shop goods during urban riots, antiquities from conflict zone museums, or artifacts from Native American sites at national parks. In the archaeological discourse, looting refers to any removal of an object of historic or archaeological interest without authorization. As cultural anthropologist Julie Hollowell-Zimmer writes, however, “what the term actually means depends a good deal on who uses it and in what context” (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003: 45). Hollowell-Zimmer uses the phrase “low-end looter” to refer to the sort of digger that Jacopo is: an amateur enthusiast who excavates without a permit. As she explains, a low-end looter is “undocumented excavation in which the products are not headed straight for the international art or antiquities market, but for less lucrative and often less visible markets or for no market at all” (Hollowell-Zimmer 2003: 46).

But “low end” of what? The term assumes that the person – the object of the label – is part of a market-driven system. Scholars might disagree whether that system is better understood as a continuum or a hierarchy, but the end result is always the same: looters are market participants and, even if they never interact with middlemen or dealers, or make a dime from their findings, they need to be plotted in the sphere of black market antiquities activity. “Low-end,” moreover, implies low status. Archaeologists and high-powered art dealers may well feel that Jacopo and other casual diggers are low status by virtue of the unglamorous sites in which they dig or the lack of profits they have to show for their efforts. But try telling that to Jacopo. His knowledge of the site around Poggio Civitate, a prestigious archaeological site and one of the heartlands of ancient Etruria, is far from low-end.

As Bourdieu reminds us, linguistic exchanges are “relations of symbolic power in which the power relations between speakers or their respective groups are actualized” (Bourdieu 1991: 37). The labels that we apply to individuals and the adjectives that we apply to their groups inscribe social identities onto them. Words differentiate humans as though such distinctions – noble or common, female or male, black or white – were natural and inevitable. But these distinctions are socially constructed rather than set by nature (itself a social construct: Fourcade 2010). Power works its way through and into discourse by limiting people’s expectations of what they are entitled to, socially and politically. This is especially evident in speech registers that originate in institutions whose authority is ordained by state or science or both. Legal discourse, Bourdieu argued, is “a creative speech which brings into existence that which it utters” (42). So when policymakers, elected officials, heads of museums, and Art Squad agents speak about *tombaroli* as though they constitute a verifiable social category, they concomitantly produce the *tombarolo*.

### ***Tombaroli* in scholarly discourse and conceptual frames**

The study of unauthorized excavation is normally the domain of archaeologists and cultural policy scholars, and their work is customarily predicated on the conclusion that unauthorized excavation is bad. In this sphere it is common and acceptable practice to rely on personal invective to malign unauthorized excavators. At an April 2013 conference on the global trade in cultural objects, hosted by the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, I heard a professor from an Ivy League archaeology department describe illicit diggers in Italy as “seedy,” “greasy,” “thieving,” and “ruthless” in the space of a twenty-minute talk. In November 2012, a UNESCO cultural heritage expert told a gathering of scholars at the American University in Rome that the unauthorized excavators she talked to in Greece were “basically immoral [...] they have no scruples about anything. These are guys you wouldn’t trust with your kids.” Here, a shared opprobrium of unauthorized excavators is assumed and humorously indulged.

In peer-reviewed print, by contrast, another form of moralizing discourse about unauthorized excavators plays out. Blanche Proulx’s 2013 article on archaeological looting, which was published in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, the flagship journal for university and professional archaeologists, is exemplary:

The looting of archaeological sites, which largely fuels the international trade in illicit antiquities, occurs when undocumented, illicitly obtained artifacts are ripped from the ground and sold, often on the legal market. Archaeology is a critical component in the study and understanding of human history, and the destruction of archaeological finds has both material and intellectual consequences. That is to mean, not only are archaeological resources finite but so is the cultural information they may yield. Looted archaeological sites and the orphaned objects removed from them (which are then bought and sold as commercial commodities) provide limited contributions to our knowledge about the human past and tell us little about the culture that produced them. In short, looted antiquities and archaeological resources retain little scientific value. As finite resources, once they are gone, they are gone forever (Proulx 2013: 111).

Proulx's argument seamlessly links unauthorized excavation with market action. In fact, her definition of looting collapses the practices of digging and selling objects, forming a complex of activities that "fuels the international trade in illicit antiquities." There is no space here for alternative meanings or understandings; Proulx does not address them. On the possibility that source countries' local economic needs and cultural traditions need to be considered before enforcing international anti-looting laws, Proulx says simply that the argument is a "weak" one (Proulx 2013: 124). Proulx's interest is in the scientific preservation of stratigraphy and the needs of archaeologists to produce new knowledge using uncorrupted material information. Looters stand outside of science, made irredeemable because of their greed and amateurism.

The anthropological scholarship, particularly the critical cultural heritage sub-field, treats unauthorized excavators with more critical balance but this can lead to other problematic assumptions. In Cristiana Panella's study of looters in East Africa, for example, she first recognizes her subjects as social actors with a variety of social roles and then asks what meaning they bring to their engagements with cultural goods. Through this holistic analysis Panella explores the tension between local and international moral scripts concerning cultural goods and heritage. There is no monolithic "looter" figure that inhabits the social space, but rather several categories of actor that use and interpret cultural objects (Panella 2011). Similarly, Kimbra Smith demonstrated that *huaqueros* in Peru are repositories of local knowledge who inhabit a gray space between licit and illegal cultural expertise (Smith 2005). *Huaqueros* are both denounced publicly by archaeologists for their looting activities and consulted privately by archaeologists for information about emerging sites and recent finds (see also Atwood 2003 on *huaqueros* and destructive looting).

Smith and Panella point to the complex social roles of unauthorized excavators, and stress that profit is not always their motive. In fact, formal law and state policy had systematically disempowered the diggers they studied, such that they were unable to connect with the buyers and secondary market sellers who might allow the diggers to derive substantial monetary gains from their artifacts. The East African and Peruvian diggers examined by Panella and Smith were not aware of themselves as being linked with the “international trade” in archaeological artifacts. If Proulx represents the majority scholarly suspicion that unauthorized excavators are integral to the international market, Panella and Smith reveal that some portion of diggers are distantly connected, if at all, to that sphere of activity. Proulx’s argument is important to address here, however, because it continues a line of scholarly thought that impacts the language available to us for discussing unauthorized excavators. That conversation is always stopped short by the inevitable moral end-point, summarized here by the Archaeological Institute of America: “looting destroys the context of any physical object by taking it out of its environment in an uncontrolled manner [and] the market in undocumented antiquities gives [incentive] to that looting.” This persistent, dual-edged criticism of unauthorized excavators – that they support the illicit market and do not care about culture – makes it difficult to talk about them with anything but assumption-laden words and frameworks.

Among Italian scholars, the sphere of unauthorized excavation and circulation of artifacts is referred to in shorthand as “archaeomafia.” As explained by Legambiente, Italy’s largest environmental and landscape organization, the archaeomafia comprises three main categories of participant, each with its identifying label and stock activities:

Among the typical figures who traffic in cultural goods there are tomb robbers (*tombaroli*), who busy themselves with producing the parts [finding artifacts] through clandestine excavation, theft, and counterfeiting; the dealers (*ricettatori*) who traffic the goods under the table (*piazzandolo*) in



the country of origin for below-market prices, to foreign countries and perhaps for medium- to high-prices; and the collectors-dealers (*committenti-ricettatori*) who sell back the objects to museums, auction houses, and private collections throughout the world. The goods are exported clandestinely – to North America, Australia, and Japan after have been cleansed (*stati ripuliti*) through false documents obtained in their processing “port,” such as Switzerland.<sup>73</sup>

The Legambiente text draws readers’ attention to three types of actor: the collectors and terminal buyers, who sit at the top of the market; the middlemen or dealers who fence objects out of Italy and into foreign lands; and the tomb robber or *tombarolo*, who does the actual digging and stands to gain the least. Of all of these terms, *tombarolo* has a social meaning very specific to archaeology, and recurred as a significant yet highly problematic construct in my interviews. Popular and scholarly discourses construct the archetypal *tombarolo*: the furtive, crafty, coarse fellow who excavates for profit and whose self-professed passions are naively directed into cheesy tourist attractions and fake antiquities. More than idle pathologizing, this discursive construct is a powerful means of structuring the field of cultural power.

### **Unauthorized Excavation from Ground Up: Reading cultural power through antiquities**

In the second half of this chapter, I bracket the archetype and flip the equation. Instead of working deductively from the (by-now common) hypothesis that the cultural core of the nation-state is threatened by widespread looting of antiquities, I work inductively from the ground up to ask how non-state and permitless actors’ interactions with antiquities tell us about the view of the state from the trenches. This view will help us to identify the fissures in cultural power, specifically the gray zones between licit and illicit forms of cultural production and the tensions

---

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.legambiente.it/temi/ecomafia/archeomafia>. Link accessed 3/17/2014.

felt by ordinary Italians over conscription into cultural guardianship without direct control or tactile ownership of the collective patrimony.

I divide this half into three sections, each one corresponding to the three recurrent themes that I identified at the beginning of the chapter: expertise, local identity, and structural ambiguity. Within each theme I identify variations and sub-themes that offer further insights into the meanings of antiquities and digging for my subjects.

### Knowledge and Division of Labor

Unauthorized excavators do not strictly follow professional excavators' protocol, but by establishing their own protocol they maintain and even heighten the excitement that accrues in anticipation of a major find (Rose-Greenland 2013). Bodily expertise, knowledge of objects, ignorance (the flip side of specialization) and the structure of team are inseparable in sustaining unauthorized excavators' work. From Michele, a "former child *tombarolo*" who participated in unauthorized excavation with his father for more than a decade, I learned that unauthorized dig teams feature specialists who perform differentiated tasks in the course of the dig. In Michele's experience, the strongest men handled the *spillone*, Michele's father tossed down a rope, and the young Michele shimmied down the shaft. If the men agreed, on the basis of Michele's report, that the tomb was worth digging out, the work proceeded rapidly (to evade detection by police authorities) but also systematically:

First my father, because he was a civil engineer, he would figure out how best to dig without having the entire structure collapse. Signore Salerno, he had a good feel for the topsoil and he'd work with my father's cousin, my Zio Daniele, to clear it. I'd sit up top and look through the dirt piles, hoping to find a coin. So I guess you could say that each of us had a particular task, and we did them independently but also as part of a team. (Michele, 56 years old, professor in the US, originally from near Tarquinia)

Dividing the labor along lines of expertise structures the excavation in two important ways. First, it guides the pace of the dig. Since organization and efficiency mark the respectable *conoscitore* from the dishonorable (because reckless and rushed) *tombarolo*, unauthorized excavators must incorporate organizational routines into their work. Patience is important. Stepping into another man's area of work in order to hasten the pace of digging, Domenico told me, was an insult to the other man. "Every one [of the diggers] knows that speed is important. But if you rush then you are no better than the chaos of the thieves [*i ladri disordinari*]." Specialized functions and organizational routines thus structure the direction and pulse of the work, building in patience and anticipation.

Division of labor at the dig site also impacts the structure of excavation by making team members dependent on each other. No single team member had the strength and skills to unearth a tomb alone, so it was physically necessary to work with someone else. But it was also cognitively important to do so. Since *conoscitori* take pride in specializing in material types, periods, and localities, they are not supposed to know everything. The guise of the connoisseur or self-taught expert relies for its effectiveness on strategic ignorance. An example of strategic ignorance was offered by Timario, a 59-year-old part-time church custodian and groundskeeper who has lived in Vescovado since infancy and served as a paid digger on the Poggio Civitate project in the late 1970s and early 1980s:

My love is coins (*numismatica*). I first learned on the excavation team (*gli scavi*) that coins are very important documents for archaeology. I learned that if you find it *in situ*, it gives you a date for the structure. After that I read a couple of books about ancient coins and became quite good at identifying them. [FRG: Do you also know about other types of metal artifacts? Tools or jewelry, perhaps?] No, no. Those things – nothing. I prefer to look for coins. There are so many, many types! I have no time for tools and jewelry.

Timario's insistence that he knows nothing (*niente*) about other categories of metal artifacts, shores up his credibility as an expert in numismatics. Because there are so many types of coins, he devotes his time and his cognitive energy to them. Were he to claim expertise in multiple categories of objects, Timario would be threatening his standing as a *conoscitore*. And in a small village like Vescovado, claims to archaeological expertise travel fast. Claims to expert status are vetted by neighbors and fellow archaeology buffs. Strategic ignorance serves the speaker by setting forth modest (thus, socially acceptable) claims and making specialty knowledge more plausible and trustworthy.

#### "All in the family": Digging Local Identity, Feeling the nation

Michele was seven years old when his father, Piero, first took him to look for archaeological objects. By the time he was 10, Michele was sent into tomb openings to scout findings for Piero and his friends. He was small enough to get through the shafts that the men punched through the soil with the *spillone*, a long, pin-shaped pole. This was the early 1960s in the region of Tarquinia, an area renowned for its rich Etruscan tombs. The explosion of scholarly and connoisseur interest in Etruscan artifacts at that time was correlated with intensified activity by clandestine excavators. When the archaeologist and civil engineer Carlo Lerici did a survey of damage inflicted by clandestine diggers on the archaeological sites in the area, he found that 400 of 550 Etruscan tombs had been broken into (Meyer 1973). Some of the damage, according to Lerici was done a very long time ago – possibly in Roman times. People have been digging into Etruscan tombs for centuries to look for artifacts and saleable treasure, to seek out holy places, and to explore for fun. Lerici could not definitively say whether the robbed tombs he encountered had been damaged in the 20<sup>th</sup> century or in years prior to that. What he did make

clear, however, was that clandestine excavation of Etruscan tombs has a long history, one that predates modern antiquities markets. This raises the possibility that contemporary unauthorized excavators are aware of a tradition of tomb robbing and see themselves as part of it – raising further questions about why they participate and how they justify doing so.

Michele is now in his mid-50s and teaches history at a university in the United States. He sat down with me for an *aperitivo* at an upscale urban bistro and talked with me for nearly 90 minutes. Michele spoke in English, except when referring to specific tools and object types, at which point he used the Italian terms. He was eager to share his memories of “digging and daring” (his term):

I thought it was an adventure. I felt important because for years I knew that my father went out in the evening to do something with his friends, something secret, and finally one day I was old enough to go with him. [Because I was the smallest] I was often the first one inside the tomb, crawling through the shaft. At first I was scared but then it was really amazing because it was my job to look through the objects there and decide if they were worth my father’s time or better to move on [to another tomb]. I learned quickly what was valuable and what wasn’t.

Sometimes Michele found something particularly valuable: a bit of ancient jewelry, say, or a *bucchero* vessel. *Bucchero* wares were especially gratifying to find, since Piero considered himself a specialist in that category of object.

That is when the adventure really began [Michele laughed]. My father would carefully wrap it and when we returned home we’d look at it together. And my mother would say, ‘Who is this one for?’ because the house was starting to fill up with his treasures.

His mother had a legitimate concern. Her husband’s collection of Etruscan artifacts grew so large that it filled the shelves in his living room, a cabinet in his bedroom, and boxes in the outdoor storage shed, which had to be cleared of bicycles and garden tools in order to make room for the

urns, pots, and statuettes. I asked Michele what Piero did with the objects once they were home.

His answer revealed an organized, in-home curatorial system:

First of all, we would bring the things – normally they were in sacks – we would bring the things to the kitchen. There was a table there and we would spread out the things on it. We looked over everything and sorted them into piles. My father stayed up late. Sometimes when I woke up he was still there, hunched over some pottery fragments, trying to piece them together.

Today Michele is, he asserts, “reformed.” It’s been more than three decades since he touched a *spillone*. Looking back on his childhood in 1970s central Italy, he recognizes that looting is illegal now and “probably was then.” But it didn’t feel like looting, he told me.

You hear about these men who steal from excavations or sell things to dealers. *They* are the [real] *tombaroli*. They are professional [thieves] and unscrupulous. It wasn’t like that with my father. He kept some things, but many he gave away [as gifts]. Some tombs he refused to violate because he felt they belonged to the archaeologists. [He believed that] real looters dig from greed, not from passion.

Michele’s narrative of his father’s excavating practices echoes Domenico’s defense of his uncle, as we encountered at the start of this chapter. Piero’s tendency to give artifacts as gifts to his family and neighbors meant that the objects circulated within the community. Michele recounted a time when his father gave an Etruscan ceramic vase to one of his nieces as a wedding gift: “She wasn’t sure what to do with it but she loved it. He could tell her all about [its history].”

Circulating antiquities in this way, as gifts with stories attached to them, was Piero’s contribution to social memory. The niece, the uncle, and presumably the niece’s new husband were thus connected to each other by means of the vase, which in turn connected the three of them to a specific place and moment in time.

Social memory is fed by stories and objects, yes, but also by physical experiences. In the course of my interview with Michele, I observed him offering memories in at least two ways.

Some recollections were factual: number of people involved with the team, objects found, depth of trench. When reaching for these recollections, Michele's gaze drifted to the table or up to the ceiling and he pursed his lips to concentrate on accuracy. This was the physiognomy of objective recollection. Other memories, however, were subjective because felt: how heavy the lid of an urn was, whether the dark trenches frightened him as a child, what the cool, damp earth felt like under the hot and dusty topsoil. When sharing these memories, Michele tended to sit back in his chair, his facial features relaxed, his eyes occasionally closed as he sought the right words for his physical memories. Several conceptual points arise from these two forms of recounting. Strong sensorial memories were linked with belonging, to the dig team as well as to a larger group (in Michele's case, to his extended family).

Yes, it could be really physically intense. I felt sometimes dizzy with excitement – like I was high or something. You have to picture it: four or five Italian males with big shovels, showing off our strength, getting dirty, with our hands bleeding from the digging because we wouldn't wear gloves. The older guys would be smoking cigarettes and I can still remember how my clothes smelled the next morning: that mix of, sort of, dirt, perspiration, cigarette smoke... That is when a memory really means something to you, when you feel and smell and taste it.

– Michele

Durkheim's theory of collective effervescence provides some perspective on Michele's "high." Collective effervescence is the specific feeling that individuals experience as otherworldly and unusually exciting (in Durkheim's words, as "God" or "mana") (Durkheim 1912 [1995]). It is characterized by embodied, physiological responses. People who experience it feel different than they usually do – more powerful, joyous, and special. Collective effervescence is a key factor in maintaining group identity and strengthening solidarity. That feeling of specialness, Durkheim argued, is generated through collective rituals, and although it creates the impression of

otherworldliness, it is in fact *society* that people are experiencing through rituals. Although sociologists often apply Durkheim's theory of collective effervescence to studies of crowd behavior and euphoria, as at crowded football stadiums, Durkheim did not link his theory to a specific crowd size or setting. Collective effervescence can be experienced in large, monumental contexts as well as intimate, physically humble settings. The key factors are ritual and sacrality.

Interestingly, unauthorized excavators often narrated their sensorial experiences of digging through the discursive filter of heritage. Rafal, a 43-year-old store manager and resident of Rome, grew up in Umbria. He spent time "dabbling" in unauthorized digging with a friend.

It is the best feeling in the world, to be in the fresh air, smelling the fresh dirt in a cool evening after a hot day. I can tell you, absolutely certainly, how it is in the dirt here and how that is maybe different in the dirt elsewhere. [closes his eyes as he rubs his fingertips together slowly] Because when I am an old man, in my bed, not able to walk, forgetting my own name, what I will remember is that feeling, of being in the land, with my friends, the rocks, the dirt, the little pieces of pottery making my pockets heavy. – Rafal, age 43, store manager and resident of Rome

In each of my interviews, I asked subjects about their recollections of the physical sensation of digging. In Italian, my question was: "Tell me, what did you like about digging? Can you describe for me what it felt like, physically?" This line of inquiry never failed to elicit an enthusiastic response. Subjects seemed pleased to explain in detail their physical strength and endurance, much the same way anglers or rafters like to tell stories about the jumbo salmon they caught on last summer's camping expedition or the fiendishly difficult stretch of class four rapids they tackled on the river trip. For unauthorized diggers, the topic of physical encounters and challenges was also inviting because it allowed them a break from my questions about morals, legality, and identity – topics that were sometimes awkward in the interviews. Subjects who were



otherwise brief in their responses suddenly became voluble on the nuts and bolts of scouting dig sites, hauling equipment, digging, unearthing objects, and keeping their operations clandestine.

From this perspective, talking about the physical act of excavating was methodologically useful. It eased the tension and allowed the subjects to redirect attention to the pleasures of digging. The pleasures that emerged most saliently from the interviews were masculine bonding, which emphasized outdoorsy toughness and the need for practical rural skills rather than empty urban wit; taking control; and sublime pleasure. This redirection was also conceptually useful.

Bodily practices and somatic experiences provide crucial insight for understanding the relationship between antiquities and social identities. Writing on the transmission of Polish national myths, Zubrzycki writes that “discursive tropes, visual images, sounds and music, tactile stimuli, and, most likely, smells as well [...] facilitated the convergence and exchanges between multiple sites of the nation and their modes of sensory perception (Zubrzycki 2011: 34).” This multiplicity of sensory perceptions facilitates synesthesia, the “transposition of sensory images or sensory attributes from one modality to another” (Zubrzycki 2011: 35, quoting Marks 1978). Artifacts sit at this juncture of transposition, their meaning crystallized by specific sensorial experiences such as the objects’ surface feel, weight, size, smell, and color, as well as their finders’ memories of the physical circumstances in which the artifact was found. Focusing on artworks and religious objects in Poland, Zubrzycki (2011) shows that three-dimensional objects abet the construction of nationhood because of their tactile and emotional affordances. It is this, what Zubrzycki calls the “national sensorium,” that makes the nation seem immanent and real, and its mythology legitimate (2011: 22). Social identities, whether national, local, or in-between, are grounded in and legitimated by these experiences.

Digging in the soil reinforces “structural nostalgia,” the idea that the famed beauty of a landscape or built environment testifies to a pristine past of concord and harmony, with local people the protectors of the pristine past and outsiders – from Rome or foreign institutions – bringing corruption and debasement (Gaggio 2014; Herzfeld 2004 on structural nostalgia). Rafal’s remarks provide a key example of the national sensorium—and how antiquities are crucially important to its sustainment. He *feels* their weight and shape in his pocket, and will *display* them on a shelf in his home. The antiquities are truly “his” because they are heavy in his pocket, close to his body. His pieces of pottery, *unearthed* with his own hands, will forever evoke *friendships* and *excitement*. By linking his social identity with the supposed uniqueness of the soil (“how it is in the dirt here”) and the specialness of objects lifted from that soil, Rafal extends the discourse of national culture. Rafal may grouse about heritage management’s ineptitude and corruption, but he is not against national culture. He embraces and promotes national culture *outside the parameters of institutionalized heritage* and inside the sphere of social memory production.

#### Deviance, Resistance, Marginality: Making sense of unauthorized excavation as social practice

In classic sociological theory, deviance is a routine and even helpful feature of social life. Durkheim argued that deviance reinforces the rules of society by reminding the majority – people who are normatively compliant – of the negative consequences of deviant behavior (Durkheim 1912). The problem with Durkheim’s account is that it assumes that the majority of the population is sympathetic to the law. This assumption ignores the role played by power. How, in other words, does the majority come to sympathize with the law? What are the sources of authority that tell us what to think about legal codes and their mechanisms of enforcement? Durkheim does not address these questions.

In more recent sociological studies of non-mainstream cultural practices, scholars stress the normative orderliness of the spheres of practice considered “deviant” by outsiders. Lachmann (1988) accepted this premise in his study of graffiti artists in New York. He went on to argue that although graffiti artists are widely understood to operate beyond the bounds of mainstream society, they actually inhabit an organized, well-functioning artistic subculture. The idea of deviance is often linked with anarchy and lack of organization, but Lachmann demonstrates that graffiti art is the product of shared norms, techniques, and aesthetic values. Seen as a chaotic, messy public nuisance by mainstream society, graffiti art is meaningful to and aesthetically organized by members of the graffiti subculture. This finding is replicated more recently in Hannah Wohl’s ethnographic study of a private erotic art club, the “Salon.” Members of the Salon draw or paint naked models and share their productions in tightly restricted circles of connoisseurship. As with the graffiti artists in Lachmann’s study, the members of the Salon are part of a subculture organized by normatively prescribed codes of taste, which Wohl theorizes as a case of social aesthetics.<sup>74</sup> Although there is no formal law against the Salon members’ practices, Wohl’s ethnographic data reveal awareness among members that their interests are non-mainstream. In a sense, then, they operate at the cultural margins by their own volition. This marginalization only enhances the significance and profundity of the artistic productions, according to the Salon members’ views.

The space of unauthorized excavation is highly structured by rules, ethical considerations, and codes of masculinity. Deviations from the rules and ethics are dealt with internally, as when one of Michele’s father’s dig partners sold one of the team’s artifact findings

---

<sup>74</sup> Wohl, H. 2013. Communities of Sense: Maintaining “Good Taste” in an Erotic Arts Club. Unpublished manuscript currently under review, provided by the author.

without permission from the group. The dig partner was expelled from the group and his infraction was quietly circulated among other groups such that the man's reputation was impugned. Jacopo told me,

If anyone does something stupid, like break something significant or make too much noise or brag to his friends, then we have a way of dealing with him.

The “dealing” might mean turfing out the offender or making him shovel topsoil for several consecutive dig sessions. But Jacopo has only had to deal once with a rules-violator because, he said, he “chooses carefully” and only people whom he trusts from prior encounters or reputation. So while scholarly and legal discourses categorize unauthorized excavators wholesale as deviants from mainstream social conventions and laws, testimonies from unauthorized excavators themselves reveal structural coherence and active militating against deviation from dig team rules.

Alternatives to the Durkheimian framing of legal and social deviance treat it as a form of resistance. The dialectical pairing of deviance and resistance became instrumental to the politics of the Italian left in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century. Narratives of the “people's” histories and societies “essentialized resistance in the margins of the state as a legitimate response to structural injustice” (Heatherington 2014: 3-4). Studies of *tombaroli* that adopt the romantic frame show clear influence by this conceptual approach (van Velzen 1997). Scholars working in that tradition link unauthorized diggers with bandits (*banditi*), whose criminal exploits in southern Italy at the time of unification were later celebrated by Hobsbawm (1969) as acts of political resistance.

While many of my subjects expressed disappointment and disillusionment in the bureaucracy, none of them offered outright rejections of institutional forms. Rafal summed up the feeling of the group when he said, “They [Finanziari and Soprintendenza staff] are just doing

their job. I might roll my eyes at what they have to do, but I'm fine so long as we avoid each other." Similarly, Timario expressed a recurring feeling when he told me that although MiBAC was bloated with procedures, paperwork, and cronies, "They [MiBAC officials] don't really infuriate me – no, I wouldn't go that far. I think it [MiBAC] should exist, if only to keep an eye on what the foreign museums are buying. [...] I don't need them around here everyday, but I wouldn't disrespect them if they did."

The back-and-forth within Rafal's and Timario's comments is symptomatic of structural ambiguity. The subjects in my study, in short, were not sure where they stand in relation to culture, national identity, and institutions. By law they stand outside the moral majority, but by local conventions they fit right in. By sharing excavation stories and describing the specific mechanisms involved, subjects simultaneously revealed political and cultural tensions inherent in the work. Only one interview subject, Jacopo in Vescovado, explicitly said that he had no respect for MiBAC authorities and the Carabinieri, and saw his dig work as a "thumb of the nose" (*si fa beffe*) towards official cultural policy. Jacopo's location in Vescovado, of course, put him on the frontlines of excavational tension between local residents and foreign archaeologists, which may account for his intensified hostility. The rest of my subjects were more circumspect, even finding camaraderie with professional archaeologists who also, they presumed, loved to dig in the dirt and be outdoors. Domenico summed up the majority view when he said, "I do my thing, and they [the archaeologists] do their thing (*Faccio la mia cosa e fanno la loro cosa*). The earth is big enough for all of us."

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter I examined how participants in unauthorized excavation make sense of their cultural work, placing themselves in a broader horizon of social memory, collective identity, and

material meanings. Although they knowingly violate heritage laws by excavating and digging without official permission, my subjects reproduced key components of archaeologists' and state officials' cultural discourse. My subjects uniformly expressed disdain for *tombaroli*, whom they deride for selling antiquities to middlemen. Such men (and women, when implicated) are *tombaroli* or *saccheggiatori* (looters). Jacopo, and other enthusiasts who insist on good digging procedures and claim to love artifacts, present themselves as *conoscitori* or connoisseurs. The key distinction between *tombaroli* and *conoscitori* is market participation: the former sell their objects, and in doing so they sell out the community; whereas the latter keep objects for study, personal pleasure, or gifts to family and close friends. As Jacopo put it, to grow up near an archaeological site is to know it as "second nature" (*istinto naturale*). From this vantage point, the value of formal archaeological training is greatly reduced and so, for that matter, is the apparatus of heritage management.

My approach to this area of inquiry has departed in important ways from the existing literature. By examining national culture from the point of view of unauthorized excavators of artifacts, I was able to make a distinction between social memory and heritage as spheres of meaning-making and collective belonging. With this distinction I avoided romanticizing unauthorized excavators as folkloric heroes marginalized by neoliberal market forces (Panella 2011; Smith 2005). I also avoided condemning unauthorized excavators as criminals, an approach common to the archaeology and legal studies literature, which present unauthorized digging and collecting as acts of violence against heritage (Atwood 2004; Brodie & Tubb 2002; Roosevelt & Luke 2006; Watson & Todeschini 2006). Identifying social memory and heritage as two related but distinct aspects of national culture allows us to transcend the usual debates about illegality and legality. Excavating without a permit is illegal – yes. The law requires citizens to

file a report (*denuncia*) against neighbors who dig up and trade antiquities – yes. I do not take a position for or against the laws, nor do I defend unauthorized excavators for breaking those laws. Instead, I have bracketed (without ignoring entirely) the legal-illegal binary and concentrated instead on the meaning, effect, and *affect* of unauthorized digging and collecting. Placing in relation to each other the practices of social memory and the rules of heritage offers insight into national culture and to *belonging* through culture.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

In late 2013, as I was writing major portions of this dissertation, MiBAC offered Italians the chance to have their say: Which artworks should be conserved? The initiative was called *L'arte aiuta l'arte* (Art serving Art). The money for the conservation work would come not from MiBAC's budget but from the proceeds of a special event entitled "Night at the Museum," in which museums held extra-late opening hours for fee-paying members of the public. Under the supervision of the Director General for the Development (*Valorizzazione*) of Cultural Patrimony, an online survey presented eight "masterpieces" in need of repair. MiBAC officials selected the works, and in a three-week period in November 2013 some two thousand Italians voted online for the one they thought most deserving of urgent conservation. As for the seven losers, voters were not told what would happen to them. *L'arte aiuta l'arte* was an admission that the government could not afford to restore all of its cultural treasures. Indeed, there are no firm plans, at present, for MiBAC to increase spending on conservation. A majority of the voters chose to spend the money on Pietro Vannucci's *Madonna and Child*, a celebrated early 16<sup>th</sup> century painting now in the Capodimonte Museum in Naples.

Government officials praised the democratic nature of *L'arte aiuta l'arte*, citing, among other things, the use of Facebook to draw public awareness to the plight of artworks needing restoration. They noted that 73% of the voters were women and 21% were from Campania; this was noteworthy, according to MiBAC, because women and southern Italians have historically



not participated strongly in government decision-making. Speaking to *National Public Radio* in the United States, Dr. Anna Maria Buzzi, director of the initiative, said: “The strength of a democratic institution is listening to its citizens. Giving people the right to choose makes them more invested in their own heritage. It makes them care more. If you give people the responsibility they are more likely to participate.”<sup>75</sup> MiBAC director Massimo Bray, in a MiBAC press release, was similarly effusive:

I am very happy with the successful outcome of this project, which has revived interest among many young people who are active on the Web and in social networks. The many comments of citizens encourage each other to work in this direction, creating ever more choices for how to share our cultural patrimony (*il nostro patrimonio culturale*).<sup>76</sup>

Bray and Buzzi did not contend with archaeologists’ criticisms that other EU countries spend billions more Euro per annum on their cultural patrimony. Nor did they respond publicly to accusations that MiBAC’s lack of transparency concerning the process through which the eight artworks were selected was an example of demagoguery. *L’arte aiuta l’arte* was a success because two thousand Italian citizens logged in and helped the government make a decision about conservation priorities.

The *L’arte aiuta l’arte* case can help us tie together the main themes of this dissertation. It offers a clear example of the state’s setting the agenda for heritage protection by determining what counts as a masterpiece, with the added twist that citizens’ input was sought. The reliance on publicly-raised funds to undertake the work highlights the inherent tension in heritage

---

<sup>75</sup> Livesay, C. “Which Artworks Should We Save? Cash-Strapped Italy Lets Citizens Vote.” *All Things Considered*, National Public Radio. January 21, 2014. Link to podcast: <http://www.npr.org/2014/01/21/263502871/which-artworks-should-we-save-cash-strapped-italy-lets-citizens-vote>.

<sup>76</sup> “La Madonna con il Bambino del Perugino sarà restaurata grazie al progetto ‘L’arte aiuta l’arte.’” Press release of the Ministero dei Beni e delle Attività Culturali e del Turismo, November 19, 2013. Link to press release: [http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/Ministero/UfficioStampa/ComunicatiStampa/visualizza\\_asset.html\\_314365184.html](http://www.beniculturali.it/mibac/export/MiBAC/sito-MiBAC/Contenuti/Ministero/UfficioStampa/ComunicatiStampa/visualizza_asset.html_314365184.html).

management: that by striving for an exhaustive index of the nation-state's legally owned cultural property, there will inevitably come a moment when there are too many objects needing attention for the resources available. The case shows, too, how cultural objects serve as important symbols for the nation. The winning painting presents an image that resonates with both the majority (Catholic) religion and the metaphor of family that is sacred to the imagined national community. And by praising democratic enfranchisement, state officials pointed to a specific and important aspect of cultural power: its extension beyond the immediate realm of heritage management to civic participation more generally. To paraphrase Buzzi, giving citizens a say about art conservation would embolden them to engage with the government in other ways.

Cultural heritage is a social construct. An object, site, or practice does not become a cultural good or heritage product until an institution or group of people with adequate social and economic capital categorizes it as such (Labadi 2007; Meskell 2002; 2013). Some things are discarded while others are retained: there is discretion involved, and decisions to be made about what to preserve and how to do so (Choay 2001). These decisions inevitably involve a complex of issues: politics, money, aesthetics, ethnic and religious identities, and scientific interests. Not everybody has the power to make and enforce decisions about what objects will be classified as heritage, which is why we must attend to present-day power relations when we engage with this subject. Heritage is not history (Lowenthal 1985). Ancient monuments and artifacts enrich our study of history, but they do not comprise a neutral or self-evident data set that can give us a full account of what happened in the past. What constitutes any given body of cultural heritage, whether at the national or local level, tells us as much or more about present-day values and interests as about the past. This is because cultural heritage is the outcome of present-day actors selecting sites, objects, and practices from an imagined past, asserting them as an "inheritance"

of the “patria,” and obliging present-day members of the community to protect that inheritance for an imagined future community (Turnbridge & Ashworth 1996).

What is puzzling about the case of Italian cultural heritage, however, is how little contestation obtains in its study. There are occasional disputes over commercial uses of cultural sites and objects, as with the controversy over the sponsorship of the Coliseum by the multi-national firm Tod’s (a leader producer of luxury shoes). There is, in addition, long-simmering frustration with museum infrastructure and bureaucratic inefficiencies. These are important issues, to be sure, but they do not directly challenge the dominant cultural discourse. In fact, criticizing the Tod’s deal reinforces the primacy of the state in protecting culture, while complaining about over-stuffed and under-staffed museums draws attention to the cultural richness of Italy. The core tenets of the cultural discourse are firmly in place: there is a unified, tangible body of sites, objects, and monuments that is unmistakably Italian; and Italy is the most culturally rich nation in the world. Italians are routinely exposed to the idea that their nation is culturally rich (implying that some are culturally impoverished).

The dominant discourse of national culture is highly effective in mobilizing and sustaining a set of legal and bureaucratic practices that demarcate licit from illicit engagements with the nation’s *beni culturali* or cultural goods. As enshrined in law since 1909, artistic goods and evocative spaces (built or natural) comprise the *people’s* cultural inheritance, administrative responsibility for which lies in the government. A robust management apparatus has been built up to handle this duty, including MiBAC, the Art Squad, the Guardia di Finanza, museums, and regional archaeological superintendents.

My dissertation set out to explore the concept of cultural power and the roles that are played by Roman and Etruscan objects (“antiquities”) in it. In the course of this discussion I

examined the nature and content of heritage administration in Italy, chiefly through MiBAC, the Art Squad, and national museums. I sought the reasons and motivation for legally enshrining antiquities as state-owned property and national treasure, and I argued that existing literature fails to account for the centrality of very old cultural objects to the creation of nation-states. Because government documents and museum displays focus on ideals and ideologies, I extended my evidentiary base to individuals' experiences with national culture – as scientists, museum staff, Art Squad agents, unauthorized diggers, and connoisseurs.

What do we have to show for this work? I situate my contributions in three main fields: nationalism studies, cultural sociology, and methodology.

### **Contributions to nationalism studies**

Previous studies of national culture have emphasized the production and performance of national culture, whether in the form of parades and ceremonies, statues and monuments, or anthems and symbols (Hobsbawm 1983). Scholarly works oriented towards these issues have offered important insights into how symbols and events are consecrated as “national,” and how they are made visible and potent to everyday citizens (Billig 2004; Edensor 2002). Following in this tradition, I examined the historical roots of nationalized antiquities and identified the social, economic, and political factors behind the contentious movement to proclaim all antiquities state property. Having constructed the history of nationalized antiquities, I went on to show how it configures in national culture, which is a *site of diverse meaning-making* as well as a *body of national objects*.

The case of Italy is well suited to this area of scholarly enquiry. The richness of its material culture – indeed, its status as a civilizational homeland (as I termed it earlier) – is widely accepted as fact. When public figures and scholars put a percentage value on Italy's share of the

world's cultural "treasures," they participate in a lively and recurring discourse that asserts, not just cultural richness but cultural *supremacy*. The weight of the country's material legacy is also a burden because it requires conservation, restoration, and constant protection. The idea that historical sites and objects are vulnerable as well as enduring is a core feature of heritage protection. Heritage relies on loss; it is meaningless without a fragmented past to yearn for.

A broader contribution of my dissertation was to theorize *cultural power* as a distinct form of state power that is constituted by control over cultural materials but is not limited to the cultural sphere. With this theory I sought to move beyond Joseph Nye Jr.'s influential work on "soft" and "hard" power (Nye 1995). Nye classifies culture under the rubric of soft power, with "culture" a broad category that encompasses novels, paintings, plays, poetry competitions, music, and religion. The aim of soft power, according to Nye, is to shape nation-states' behavior in non-violent ways by subtly influencing citizens' ideas and ambitions. In my analysis I dispense with the hard/soft power distinction and situate culture – specifically *objects* – in a sphere of state activity that manages cultural objects and sites through heritage rules and enforces those rules through police and the judiciary.

The reach of culture power extends beyond the sites and monuments enumerated by heritage protection lists. A key example of this is the impact of heritage management on the presentation of history, specifically the development of indexical historicization. In the first chapter I defined indexical history as a "narrative of the past focused on quantity, categories, and organizational procedures. [...] The meaning of index is two-fold: repatriated antiquities are an index of cultural power in that they attest to the state's effectiveness; and the listing and cataloguing of objects teaches nationals that their cultural patrimony is significant primarily for its size" (page 22). I have argued that the varieties of historical experience merit study because

(a) they depend on and are constituted by state practices (and thus reveal state interests and priorities); and (b) they point to the prioritization of rational, cognitive knowledge forms, with state and science featuring as logical purveyors of cultural authority. Indexical historicization emphasizes quantifiable properties over qualitative, ephemeral qualities of objects; categories, classifications, schemes, and facts over single-image descriptions, the mythical, and the extrasensory.

Nothing is ever that easy, of course. The rise of modernity and quantification would seem to go concomitantly with the consolidation of knowledge forms and the elimination of the extrasensory from the list of legitimate epistemological options. But as I explained in my discussion of Carandini and Broccoli (Chapter Four), popular archaeologists show that the mythical and extrasensory forms of “knowing” antiquities and ruins are still alive and well in the field of archaeology. What this says about nationhood, identity, and cultural objects, I assert, is that affective epistemologies have not actually been eliminated from archaeological discussions. They have, instead, been *restricted* to certain actors within the sphere of professional archaeology. Carandini’s *divinatio* can be tolerated because of his record of government service to archaeology.

My work offers a further contribution to the literature by showing how heritage functions as a device for thinking about the state. In the course of my interviews with unauthorized excavators, I encountered the widespread perception that the state does not properly care about all antiquities but rather prefers certain types or categories (marble statues, painted pottery). Unauthorized excavators complained about state officials’ obsession with appearance (pointing to the natty uniforms and “self-promoting” *blitz* reports). For the residents of rural Vescovado, heritage management is often the most visible and steady presence of the state. This happens

when the archaeology team shows up every summer and takes over the town. It happens when *Carabinieri* slowly drive along the perimeter of the Poggio Civitate site, and when the museum in nearby Murlo holds an event. In the absence of other forms of state power, heritage management stands in for the state. From the point of view of ordinary Italians in Vescovado and other similarly rural towns, heritage *is* the state.

Heritage is not, however, identical to the nation. This distinction emerged through my interviews forcefully, as when unauthorized excavators spoke of how the intense somatic experience of excavating deepened their love for the soil *here*, in Italy. Rafal, for example, linked the heavy feeling of the potsherds in his pockets to being part of a cultural lineage. That lineage does not extend from the modern nation-state, but rather from the *patria* – the ancient precursor to the nation. When my subjects spoke with pride about Italian antiquities and ruins, or when they described their sensorial memories of digging in the earth, they situated themselves in relation to the *patria*, which is, by definition, unbounded by temporal and political parameters.

### **Contributions to cultural sociology**

My dissertation deals with questions central to the nascent material studies literature. Accepting the core tenet of this literature – that materials are not merely a vehicle for communicating a message but are themselves active creators of meaning – I then analyzed cultural power as drawing its force from the particularities of objects. It matters that Italy's antiquities look the way they do; that marble and terracotta age as they do; that natural processes of material decay turn buildings into ruins. I examined materiality and cultural power at three levels: macro (state and institutions); meso (organized excavations), and micro (interviews with diggers, professional archaeologists, and Art Squad agents). This multi-level approach revealed the messy praxis of cultural power. Beyond heritage protection laws and the manufactured bravura of repatriation

“wins,” we saw in my ethnographic data criticism and confusion, deviations and habits, and individual understandings of nationhood and belonging that do not map neatly onto official stories about national culture and the logic of government control.

Antiquities offer a haptic experience of knowing the state and its history. Looking at the ways in which my subjects engage with antiquities (digging, collecting, touching, cleaning, displaying, trading, and so forth), revealed the depth of connection that people develop with their objects. This is a unique area of study because most national subjects do not engage with “their” ancient cultural heritage this way. Indeed, it is illegal to do so. One advantage of analyzing ethnographically the ways in which people handle antiquities is that it identifies another connection in addition to the one between people and objects: people and nation, mitigated by those objects. This is the concept of *national sensorium* (Zubrzycki 2011). Smelling the earth, feeling the weight of potsherds in one’s pocket, seeing a long-forgotten urn in a dimly lit chasm beneath Tarquinia – these are experiences that were recounted with almost poetical enthusiasm by my subjects. My subjects then linked their sensorial memories with the nation. The smell of the earth was special to this soil in Italy; collecting objects for enjoyment, not for profit, was “how things are done here.” The *this* and the *here* were the local, and the local is not identical with the national, but the local can only be understood in relation to the national.

I insisted throughout the dissertation, and I insist again here, that unauthorized excavators’ esteem for active, hands-on engagements with antiquity – as opposed to state-controlled, institutionally sanitized heritage experiences – is not a form of resistance to national culture. Mine is not a study of local versus national identities even though that tension remains important to any consideration of national culture in Italy. What my data reveal, as suggested by the forgoing paragraph, is that unauthorized excavators reproduced the discourse of superior



Italian culture that is, at root, the state's discourse. Further, my evidentiary base sustains an analytical distinction between heritage and social memories as separate but related aspects of national culture. Both concern the reproduction of social life. Both create affective and cognitive landmarks, which in turn provide common references to historical change and continuity.

However, one major difference between social memory and heritage is the fact that while the former involves a range of people, events, and things concentrated in specific social spaces, the latter is a specialized branch of management that privileges professional archaeologists and art historians, scientific experts, government officials, police, the judiciary, regional and national museums, and multinational organizations, conventions, and charters. Arantes reminds us that among the heritage institutions and actors, "political commitments and economic priorities may differ from – and sometimes are in conflict with – local social realities" (Arantes 2007: 290).

Distinguishing between social memory and heritage protection recast national culture as an active, multi-level site of engagement with history and identity. This move also shed light on why the *tombarolo* is a despised social actor. The *tombarolo* stands outside "Culture" as it is constructed and legislated by the state. His stories, artifactual finds, and object displays, and the circulation trajectories that he sets in motion by giving away artifacts as gifts, contribute to social memory but do so outside the parameters of heritage. A question arising from my observations is whether and how social memory-making is perceived by heritage officials as a threat to their work. Further analysis is required to establish whether this is the case. What my evidentiary base suggests, however, is that Art Squad agents and state archaeologists do not see value in social memory-making, or at least not enough that heritage strictures should be set aside to allow unauthorized men and women to dig and collect (even in controlled circumstances, as is done in the United Kingdom under the Portable Antiquities Scheme).

The contraposition of social memory and heritage is one example of a gap between the discourse and institutional practices of the state on the one hand, and the “feelings” and opinions of ordinary citizens on the other. Another gap sits between punitive legal codes and long-standing local practices. Citizens are obliged to report to police their information about “stolen” artworks or “robbed” tombs. When I reminded by Italian friends and roommates about this, they laughed. One Vescovado man pointed to a Roman amphora on his patio (now being used as a plant pot). He explained that his grandmother had a fondness for old things, and insisted that she “never stole anything.” His immediate interest was in quashing any ideas I might have about his lawless granny. But I realized, too, that he was showing me how it is possible to collect and use antiquities for oneself, as an act of (informal) heritage, outside state-organized heritage.

### **Contributions to methodology**

The third field to which my dissertation contributes is methodology. Ethnographic data remind us that the production of national culture happens not just in marquee museums and government offices, but also in the small towns, *Tabacchi*, and non-descript bars, where ordinary Italians live their lives, spend time with neighbors and friends, watch sports, and grouse about traffic and tourists. Whereas my interview subjects in museums and government responded to my questions with polished answers and careful re-articulations of official heritage rhetoric, my subjects in Vescovado and Termini departed from the rhetoric of heritage while still reproducing the discourse of national culture. It was in these spaces of disjuncture that I found the boundaries between licit and illicit, local and national, honorable and dishonorable to be porous and continually revisited.

Particularly in the area of nationalism studies, micro- and macro- analyses have typically not been put into productive conversation with each other. Macro-level studies, among them

Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Gellner's *Nations and Nationalism*, and Smith's *The Ethnic Origins of Nationalism*, focus on institutional and political developments in the creation of nation-states. Micro-level studies, including Billig's *Banal Nationalism* and Tim Edensor's *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*, center on specific, everyday spaces of nationhood production. These areas of work seem complementary but have for the most part developed discrete agendas, questions, and arguments. The problem, Surak explains, is this: "While studies of nationalism usually adopt historical methods to inquire into the emergence or resurgence of nations over long swathes of time, research on nationhood has typically turned to ethnographic evidence to explore how nations are instantiated in routine practices and the moment-to-moment unfolding of social interactions. Only occasionally have the tensions between these differing approaches surfaced in open debate" (Surak 2013: 3).

Linking macro-, meso-, and micro-practices is not a matter of shoring up one's stable evidentiary base with *n*'s of different depth and color. Bringing together these approaches and their data is risky because the data may challenge as well as support each other. This was clear in my discussion with Milena, the young archaeologist who had been part of heritage management through museum employment. Milena understood well the concerns of heritage protection and agreed with her colleagues that excavation should be done in a particular, professionally taught fashion. But she personally disagreed with the government's current interest in repatriating artifacts supposedly taken illegally from Italy, when in fact there are already too many sites, objects, and monuments in Italy for the government to conserve and protect properly. She advocated leaving disputed objects in foreign collections, so long as they receive the appropriate care. Milena turned the tables on the Art Squad by suggesting that if government officials truly loved art they would stop acting self-interestedly (to bolster national pride through repatriation

“wins”) and instead allow the objects to stay where they are and get the material care they need. This perceptive critique of heritage management would not have come to light had I limited my research to government archives, reports, and scholarly papers on heritage (even those critical of heritage). By the same token, had I done a purely ethnographic study of archaeologists without connecting up their words and actions with state-level laws and official rhetoric (as promulgated by Colasanti), I would have missed the institutional logic that Milena was struggling with (and always, inevitably, referring to because of its omnipresence).

### **Future research directions**

Every research project requires that some questions be omitted. My dissertation is no different. But the questions left aside should not be forgotten. Future research in two specific areas, which I deal with only lightly, could help to deepen our understanding of how cultural power works at the state level and how it changes over time.

### Cultural policy

Compared with other EU countries, debates about cultural policy have largely been for institutional insiders. Such debates have traditionally been limited to the pages of academic journals and government reports. *L'arte aiuta l'arte*, discussed at the beginning of this chapter, excited curiosity and praise in part because it was a striking departure from the usual practices of making cultural policy decisions. In the Italian-language scholarly works on cultural policy, moreover, there is little in the way of critical analysis, historical contextualization, and interpretation, which are necessary to be able to relate “cultural policies to party political priorities and strategies, to intellectual debates, and to changes in patterns of cultural consumption” (Bianchini, Torrigiani & Cere 1996: 291). One reason for the lack of critical

reflection on cultural policy may be the Romantic tradition of emphasizing the significance of the fine arts and heritage to the creation and sustainment of citizenship and national consciousness. Another reason could be the lines of ideological debate after World War Two, in which Left and Right focused on literature and the press but objects and monuments were not subject to direct critical reflection (Ricciardi 2012).

Whatever the reasons, scholars continue to neglect cultural policy as an object of analysis in Italy. The recent turn towards critical cultural heritage studies has mitigated this somewhat, although that scholarly agenda is conceptually informed by post-colonialist thought and so concentrates empirically on non-western, Global South cases (Joy 2012; Meskell 2013). Italy's cultural policy merits careful study because of its widespread influence (for example, the Art Squad model's exportation) and its reach into public life. Future researchers must ask searching questions about whose interests are served by cultural policy, and how Italy's cultural policy apparatus compares with other EU nations' – a question especially relevant for emerging malcontent over economic bailouts for EU member states that happen also to be archaeological source nations. The stakes, in other words, go beyond statues, monuments, and museums.

#### The “right” to heritage as social identity

There is now widespread scholarly and political consensus that every community of people, whether grouped by ethnic, regional, or national affiliation, has the right to enjoy and preserve its own body of sites and objects. But what happens when members of that community – perhaps even a sizable share of it – reject the state's model for correct engagement with the “common” cultural heritage? Exploring this question with sustained ethnography could give us stronger analytical purchase on the concept of *godimento pubblico*, or public enjoyment. Public enjoyment was the refrain of early 20<sup>th</sup> century cultural policy reformers, who argued that

antiquities and other cultural treasures should be nationalized in order to protect the people's inheritance. Those objects were to be held in trust by the state, made available in carefully prescribed ways for the people to observe: in museums, catalogues, postcard reproductions, and traveling exhibits. Of these, the museum has emerged as *the* key site for public enjoyment. This development puts museums in an interesting relationship with the idea that a community of people has a "right" to enjoy and preserve its cultural goods. Who has agency within this relationship? Who decides what "public enjoyment" means? My point is not that we should oppose museums or cultural heritage. My point, rather, is that we must continue to ask searching questions about when, why, and how the current set of institutional patterns and relationships came into being.

### **Pro patria et cultura**

Above all, I have tried to show that cultural objects' nationhood meaning transcends the usual categories of ethnic or civic nationalism. Antiquities are property of the Italian state if they are found in (or were removed from) anywhere within the national borders. At the same time, antiquities belong to the national family. When repatriated antiquities are narrated as long-lost relatives who have come back to their home, they blur the boundaries between ethnic and civic modes of belonging to a nation-state. Antiquities pattern everyday life in Italy today, sustaining categories of power and exclusion and concentrating collective memories into certain symbolically powerful categories and sites. They will outlast us as they have outlasted two millennia of Caesars and civil servants. Bracketing ethnic and civic categories of nationalism, and focusing instead on cultural nationalism, we can understand more deeply how and why it is that nations belong to antiquities and not the other way around.

## APPENDIX A

### **Methodology: Data Collection and Analytical Strategies**

When I began this project it was in order to study something that I thought of as the black market in antiquities. After ten years' training and employment as a classical archaeologist and assistant museum curator, I thought I had a good sense for how it worked: looters pull artifacts from the ground and sell their finds to middlemen, who then smuggle the objects to dealers at border crossings and international freeports (Campbell 2013). I understood "black market" as a coherent, bounded social sphere with a profit-oriented logic drawn from the so-called white or legitimate market. I thought, too, that the moral parameters were clear. I had long ago concluded that participants in the black market are lawbreakers who are fundamentally hostile to archaeological science and method and, more broadly, to the public-minded spirit of sharing and appreciating antiquities through museums and books. All that was left was for me to find a cast of characters to interview or observe and then skillfully shed light on their procedures for finding, evaluating, and smuggling antiquities across the borders. I chose Italy because it is a country in which I had worked as a field archaeologist, and because it is routinely held up as an exemplary case of how the national government is effectively fighting the black market trade in antiquities. Within a week of beginning my fieldwork, I had overhauled my presumptions and adjusted my research methods accordingly.

## **Ethnographic data collection and analysis**

### Planning the study: Principles of design and method

My ethnographic data draw from two groups of subjects: unauthorized excavators, and everybody else. Due to their participation in illegal activities and heightened risks for participating in the study, the unauthorized excavators required specific methodological protocols and ethical considerations. I will explain my study design and data collection strategies for the unauthorized excavators later in this section.

For the interviews with “everybody else” – archaeologists, state officials, and residents in the sites that I studied – I used the data collection model that I first employed in 2010 and 2011, during a project on team dynamics among archaeologists in Italy. For that study, published as “Seeing the Unseen,” I used a combination of semi-structured interviews and observations, the latter component facilitated by my being allowed to join in the work of the dig team. As I explain at length in the journal article I published about that project, I studied three archaeological field schools in Italy over the course of two summers. I conducted 58 semi-structured interviews, with questions focused on teamwork, knowledge building, tools, and the nature of discovery (Rose-Greenland 2013). The structure of the dig sites provided me with a ready-made sample pool: my inquiry was into team dynamics so I limited myself to selecting potential interviewees from among the ranks of the team members. The nature of the dig team was such that everybody on it was university-trained, which meant that they were familiar with the idea of interviews and qualitative study – a familiarity that was in my favor, since potential subjects’ curiosity about research into their own discipline made them predisposed to agree to be interviewed. Accessing the study sites and their personnel was relatively easy, moreover, because of my professional training in the discipline and my project’s endorsement by other archaeologists.



From the point of view of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Michigan, the field school study was exempt from IRB oversight because it presented little to no risk to the subjects. Because I was interviewing men and women in the context of the workplace and about matters related to the normal course of their jobs, I was not adding further risks to their reputation or safety. Talking about digging was something they did all day, and my interview questions were a natural extension of that activity. On this basis I was able to extend my study to include a wider pool of participants for the *Ruling Culture* research. The state officials, archaeologists, and scholars that I planned to interview would be approached through the ordinary course of their work and given the option to refuse questions that they felt uncomfortable answering. The “Seeing the Unseen” study, in short, provided the methodological groundwork for a substantial portion of the dissertation work. I recruited additional archaeologists to the sample set for *Ruling Culture* and expanded it by reaching beyond the confines of field archaeology. But some of the material from “Seeing the Unseen” that did not make it into the journal article was kept aside and incorporated into this study. In such cases I clearly indicate that the material originated in that study – an important consideration because it meant that my interview prompt included no explanation of my interest in looting and state control over antiquities (as it did for the *Ruling Culture* interviews).

It was the “Seeing the Unseen” fieldwork that led me to the present study. After artifacts were stolen from “Vergilia,” one of my study sites, I observed officers from the local Carabinieri arrive to perform an inspection and write a report. The field director at Vergilia was not impressed by the officers’ conduct, telling me in an interview afterwards that they were “always too little, too late” and that she herself could have determined “in about five minutes” after talking with locals who had been behind the theft. The episode alerted me to the practical and

ideological complexities of dealing with antiquities theft, and it was then that I sketched out the questions and design ideas for *Ruling Culture*. But the methodological approach that I used for the field school study – personal introductions, participation in the excavation work, living with the team, and conducting a series of one-to-one interviews and follow-up discussions – would not be, I concluded early, transferrable to my study of unauthorized excavators.

### IRB Protocol, ethics, and study design

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) at the University of Michigan set the parameters for my fieldwork with unauthorized excavators, and their strictures continued to inform my work as I reported back to them on subject recruitment, study site changes, and adverse events (there were none). The IRB had two main concerns: my subjects' privacy, and my personal safety. The risks that I was willing to undertake in the course of my work were largely my own to assess and negotiate. After speaking at length with the IRB study manager who was assigned to my study, I discerned two types of personal risks: imminent physical ones (potentially encountered, for example, by meeting an unknown interviewee in an isolated place) and future professional ones. Professional risks include acquiring data about crimes, past or ongoing, that could be of interest to legal authorities and lead to subpoena. I wished to avoid subpoena because releasing my data could lead police officials and prosecutors back to my interview subjects. Even if there were a very low risk of that happening, I was ethically bound by the IRB's human subjects study protocol to inform them that they could incriminate themselves by talking to me about specific acts of looting or looted artifacts that they had sold or received. I dealt with the imminent physical risks by following a few procedural rules. First, I met interview subjects in public spaces (bars, cafes, parks, business offices, and piazzas) and during daylight hours. Second, I visited private homes only when it was clear that other family members would be present. Third,

I scrubbed my Web profile of references to my home address and children's names. I did not pull my Web profiles – Academia.edu, Facebook, University of Michigan Department of Sociology page – entirely, however. I wanted potential subjects to be able to look me up online of their own accord to verify my institutional affiliations and look at my previous academic publications.

Dealing with protecting subjects' privacy was a key piece of my study design work. Unauthorized excavation of archaeology sites is illegal in Italy, and unauthorized diggers are regularly arrested and criminally prosecuted. Further, "outing" subjects as unauthorized diggers opened the possibility that they would face social censure and loss of standing in the community. These risks I mitigated by adhering to a strict process of protecting interview subjects' identity: assigning pseudonyms, refraining from snowball sampling and minimizing interview "spillage," and storing my handwritten notes and typed transcripts in secure places (on spillage of information from one interview to another: Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

The IRB approval process also involved close examination of my interview questions and consent protocol. I shared my interview questions with the IRB committee's resident anthropologist. His feedback convinced me to change the content of several questions so that I left them both open-ended and sufficiently structured to guide my subjects away from implicating others (or themselves) in criminal activity that could jeopardize all of us. Before embarking on my fieldwork I hired a native speaker of Italian to coach me on my pronunciation and conversational style. I did not mind that I speak Italian with an American accent; in fact, I saw that as an asset for establishing myself as a friendly stranger. The objective of the interview practice was to refine my pitch and delivery so as to avoid pitfalls (wrongly placed emphases that could insult my subjects or imply false knowingness) and clarify my meaning.

### First days in the field

By the time I started my second summer of fieldwork for this project, I accepted that interviewing smugglers, thieves, and dealers would not be possible – so long as I was looking for people who fit my pre-conceived categories “smuggler,” “thief,” and “dealer.” The problem was not just semantic. Naturally, most people do not like to be called smugglers or thieves. I was not so naïve as to think that I could post study subject solicitations for *trafficienti* and *ladri* online or in local Italian newspapers and wait for the calls to roll in. But I did think that through sustained efforts to win trust with small groups of people in one or two communities over a long period, I could meet smugglers and antiquities thieves and thereby gain insight into the secret world of the black market.

But befriending and interviewing traffickers and thieves in the black market was the wrong way to think about it. What I came to understand, and what I will analyze in depth across the dissertation, is that there is no single, bounded black market in antiquities. Moreover, labels such as *trafficante* and *ladro* are unhelpful for examining the complicated values, roles, and ideas at play in the circulation, use, and evaluation of antiquities. My focus instead is on the lively, informal domestic “market” in antiquities in Italy. This aspect of cultural nationalization is much less studied and remains poorly understood. I put the word *market* in quotation marks deliberately to suggest my unease with the usefulness of the word in this context. There is indeed an illicit trade in Italian antiquities today. Part of my fieldwork involved getting to know men who are active in this trade. But the trade, I learned, involves much more than envelopes of cash handed over for Etruscan urns. I met men who traded with each other coins for pots or pots for votive statues; men who gave informal lectures on *bucchero* ware to neighbors and fellow archaeology buffs in exchange for bottles of homemade wine; and men who gave artifacts as

gifts at weddings and baptisms. The domestic “market,” in this sense, can be better thought of as “circulation.” The circulation is effectuated in *circuits*, a term I appropriate from the anthropological literature because it captures the dynamism and range of actors and relationship forms that the term “group” does not easily accommodate (Nakamura 2013; Boni 2014).

With all of my interviews, I understood that I was asking my subjects for sensitive information. This was especially the case with the unauthorized excavators for whom, despite their nonchalance at the prospect of police trouble, describing to me their digging and collecting practices constituted a risk. But the archaeologists, state officials, and neighbors of unauthorized excavators were also sharing sensitive information with me, and I treated it as such. This research project, which started out as an attempt to shed light on the dark corners of the antiquities black market, ended up examining an issue even more sensitive and morally-fraught: how a secular democracy, heir to inestimable cultural treasure, uses state power to control the circulation and meaning of antiquities. The analysis hinges on the objects themselves, first as icons and now as indices of cultural power.

## APPENDIX B

### Table of Nationalization Legislation

Nation-state	Definition of legally protected cultural objects	Year objects nationalized
China	“Cultural relics”, including art and objects of historic interest dating from 75,000 BC to AD 907 <sup>77</sup>	1961/2002
Egypt	“All monuments and artifacts uncovered in the country,” from pre-history to the modern era, “are the undisputed property of the Egyptian government.” <sup>78</sup>	1859/1983 <sup>79</sup>
Greece	Cultural objects and artifacts dating to before AD 1453.	1826 (1932, 2002)
India	Objects that have been in existence for not less than 100 years. For manuscripts, the cutoff is 75 years.	1972
Italy	“Goods” ( <i>beni</i> ) moveable or immovable having a cultural and historic significance and made at least 50 years prior where the artisan is no longer living	1909 (1939, 2004)
Turkey	All Turkish-made carpets over 99 years old and other types of objects that predate 1923 and are determined by government officials to be antiques	1906
United States	Any remains of past human life or activity which are of archaeological interest and which are at least 100 years old, excluding coins and human remains. <sup>80</sup>	1906

---

<sup>77</sup> As articulated in the January 2009 *Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the People’s Republic of China Concerning The Imposition of Import Restrictions on Categories of Archeological Materials From the Paleolithic Period Through the Tang Dynasty and Monumental Sculpture and Wall Art At Least 250 Years Old*.

<sup>78</sup> Supreme Council of Antiquities “Recovering Stolen Treasures” site: [www.sca-egypt.org/eng/RST\\_MISS.htm](http://www.sca-egypt.org/eng/RST_MISS.htm)

<sup>79</sup> From 1859 a government archaeological office issued excavation permits and arrested illicit excavators. But the objects themselves were not declared property of the nation-state – with the State being the exclusive and eternal owner of artifacts and antiquities – until 1983.

<sup>80</sup> Human remains are subject to ownership claims by registered Native American tribes through the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (Public Law 101-601; 25 U.S.C. 3001-3013).

## APPENDIX C

### Images

1. Unveiling the Euphronios *krater* at the Ministry of Culture. Rome, January 19, 2008. Photo credit: Plinio Lepri/Associated Press.
2. Two officers from the Syracuse office of the Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale (Carabinieri Sezione Tutela Patrimonio Culturale Di Siracusa) (TPC or “Art Squad”) at a press conference announcing the successful completion of “Operazione Aitna” recovery of archaeological objects, March 9, 2011. The officers wear the formal (dress) uniform of the TPC. The operation recovered 250 archaeological objects, 24 metal detectors, and 27 persons labeled “tombaroli” in the press. Photo credit: Department of Sicilian Cultural Goods and Identity.
3. Press conference announcing the success of “Operazione Tomb Raiders” in Foggia, July 11, 2013. The image presents (L-R) Col. Luigi Cortellessa, vice-commander of the Comando Carabinieri Tutela del Patrimonio Culturale; Col. Antonio Basilicata, head of the Foggia office of the Carabinieri; and Comandante Stefania Michelange, commander of the TPC office in Bari. The three officers explain the fruits of the operation, which recovered 548 archaeological objects and 340 silver and bronze coins in addition to jewelry. Photo credit: statoquotidiano.it
4. Two *carabinieri* inspect the archaeological site of Rocca di Entella (Sicily), where three “tombaroli” dug out and attempted to take away archaeological objects. August 22, 2012. The three men were arrested in a “blitz” and subsequent media coverage included their mug shots as well as action shots of officers at the scene of the incident. Images of Art Squad officers, *carabinieri*, and *finanziari* (officers of the

Guardia di Finanza) inspecting, measuring, and standing guard over archaeological sites circulate widely in the Italian media. Photo credit: Corriere del Mezzogiorno.

5. Cover image from Gustavo Strafforello's *La Patria: Geografia dell'Italia*, Sardinia volume (published 1895). The image presents Roma, the female personification of ancient Rome, surrounded by attributes of knowledge and geographical study with a map of Italy behind her.





Image 1: Unveiling the Euphronios *krater* at the Ministry of Culture



Image 2: Officers from the Syracuse office of the Tutela del Patrimonio



Image 3: Press conference announcing the success of “Operazione Tomb Raiders”



Image 4: Two *carabinieri* inspect the archaeological site of Rocca di Entella (Sicily)

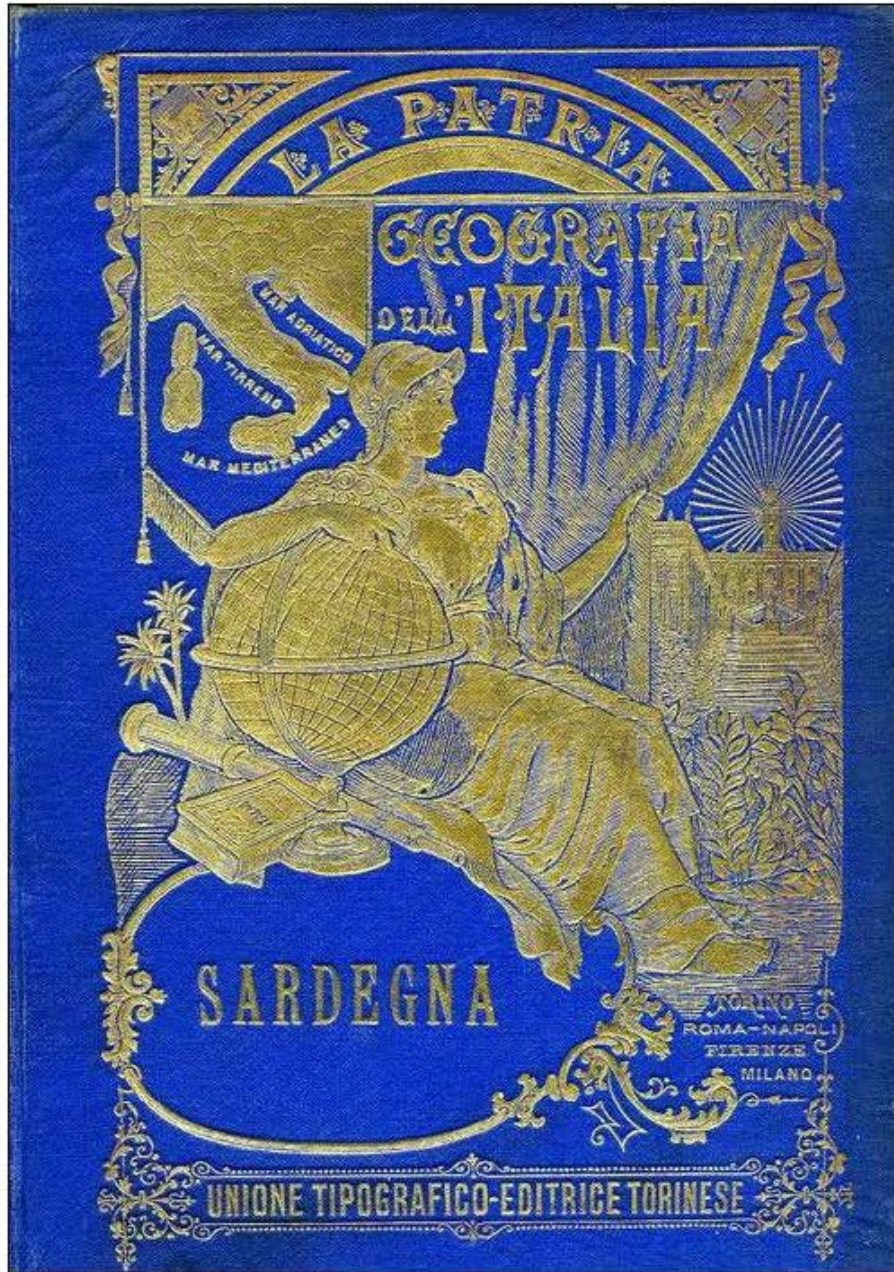


Image 5: Cover image from Gustavo Strafforello's La Patria: Geografia dell'Italia

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abu El-Haj, N. 2001. *Facts on the Ground: Archaeological Practice and Territorial Self-fashioning in Israeli Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Adams, J. 2005. *The Familial State: Ruling Families and Merchant Capitalism in Early Modern Europe*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Adler, C. and K. Polk. 2005. The Illicit Traffic in Plundered Antiquities. In P. Reichel (ed.), *Handbook of Transnational Crime and Justice*, 98–113. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Agulhon, M. 1981. *Marianne into Battle. Republican imagery and symbolism in France, 1789-1880*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Aliberti, G. 2000. *La resa di Cavour: il carattere nazionale italiano tra mito e cronaca, 1820-1976*. Florence: Le Monnier.
- Anderson, B. 1991. *Imagined Communities*. London: Verso.
- Appadurai, A. (ed.) 1986. *The Social Life of Things. Commodities in Cultural Perspective*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Arantes, A. A. 2007. Diversity, Heritage and Cultural Politics. *Theory, Culture and Society* 24, no. 7–8: 290–296.
- Aronczyk, M. 2013. *Branding the Nation: The Global Business of National Identity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Arthurs, J. 2012. *Excavating Modernity: The Roman Past in Fascist Italy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Askew, M. 2010. The Magic List of Global Status: UNESCO, World Heritage and the Agendas of States. In S. Labadi and C. Long (eds.), *Heritage and Globalisation*, pp. 19–44. London: Routledge.
- Balibar, E. 2004. *We, the People of Europe? Reflections on Transnational Citizenship*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Balzani, R. 2003. *Per le antichità e le belle arti. Le legge n. 364 del 20 giugno 1909 e l'Italia giolittiana*. Roma: Mulino.

- Barbati, C., M. Cammelli, and G. Sciuillo (eds.) 2011. *Diritto e gestione dei beni culturali*. Bologna.
- Baxa, P. 2010. *Roads and Ruins: The symbolic landscape of Fascist Rome*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Bellah, R. 1991 [1970]. *Beyond Belief. Essays on Religion in a Post-Traditionalist World*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Benzecry, C. 2008. Azul y oro: The many lives of a football jersey. *Theory, Culture and Society* 25 (1): 49-76.
- Berezin, M. 1994. Cultural Form and Political Meaning: State-subsidized Theater, Ideology, and the Language of Style in Fascist Italy. *American Journal of Sociology* 99(5): 1237-1286.
- Berezin, M. 1997. *Making the Fascist Self: The Political Culture of Interwar Italy*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Berger, P. 1967. *The Sacred Canopy: Elements of a Sociological Theory of Religion*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.
- Betzer, S. 2011. Archaeology Meets Fantasy: Chassériau's Pompeii in Nineteenth-Century Paris. In Hales, S. and J. Paul (eds.), *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today*, pp. 118-135. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bhabha, H. 1985. *The Location of Culture*. New York & London: Routledge.
- Bianchi, F., M. Torrigiani and R. Cere. 1996. Cultural policy. In D. Forgacs and R. Lumley (eds.), *Italian Cultural Studies: an Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bilgin, P. and B. Elis. 2008. Hard Power, Soft Power: Toward a more realistic power analysis. *Insight Turkey* 10 (2): 5-20.
- Billig, M. 2004 [1995]. *Banal Nationalism*. London: SAGE.
- Black, J. 2003. *Italy and the Grand Tour*. New Haven and London: YUP.
- Blanning, T.C.W. 2002. *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bonomo, B. 2013. *Presa della Parola: A review and discussion of oral history and the Italian 1968*. *Memory Studies* 6 (1): 7-22.
- Bourdieu, P. 1990 [1980]. *The Logic of Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Bourdieu, P. 1991. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bowker, G.C. and S.L. Star. 1999. *Sorting things Out: Classification and its Consequences*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

- Bowman, B. 2008. Transnational Crimes Against Culture: Looting at Archaeological Sites and the “Grey” Market in Antiquities. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice* 24: 225–42.
- Bravo, A. 2008. *A colpi di cuore. Storie del sessantotto*. Rome-Bari: Laterza.
- Braudel, F. 1993 [1963]. *A History of Civilizations*. Harmondsworth: Allen Lane.
- Brodie, N. 2008. The Western Market in Iraqi Antiquities. In L. Rothfield (ed.), *Antiquities under Siege*, 63-73.
- Brodie, N.J. and K.W. Tubb (eds.) 2002. *Illicit Antiquities: The Theft of Culture and the Extinction of Archaeology*. London: Routledge.
- Broers, *The Napoleonic Empire in Italy, 1796-1814*.
- Brubaker, R. 1992. *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Burke, P. 1997. *Varieties of Cultural History*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Campbell, P. 2013. The Illicit Antiquities Trade as a Transnational Criminal Network: Characterizing and Anticipating Trafficking of Cultural Heritage. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20: 113-153.
- Cantarella, F. 2012. The Construction of Crime and the Criminal: Pathologies of the Italian Legal System. Paper presented at the Norms in the Margins and Margins of the Norm conference, Brussels, Belgium, October 26, 2012.
- Capitelli, G. 2003. Le icone del culto in difesa dell’identità anti-moderna. In Pinto, S., L. Barroero & F. Mazzocca (eds.) *Maestà di Roma da Napoleone all’Unità d’Italia, Universale ed eterna, Capitale delle arti* (Exhibition catalogue), 249-260.
- Carandini, A. 1979. *Archeologia e cultura materiale : dai lavori senza gloria nell'antichità a una politica dei beni culturali*. Bari: De Donato.
- Carroll, P. 2006. *Science, Culture, and Modern State Formation*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Casillo, R. 2006. *The Empire of Stereotypes. Germaine de Staël and the Idea of Italy*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Cassanelli, R. and Pinna, G. 2005. *Lo Stato aculturale: intorno al Codice dei beni culturali*. Milan: Editoriale Jaca Book S.p.A.
- Cecchelin, R. and O. Bordo. 1997. *Omero: la mia vita con gli Etruschi*. Ed. Mediteranee.
- Ceserani, G. 2012. *Italy’s Lost Greece. Magna Graecia and the Making of Modern Archaeology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Ceserani, G. and A. Milanese (eds.) 2007. *Antiquarianism, Museums and Cultural Heritage: Collecting and its Contexts in Eighteenth-Century Naples*. Special volume, *Journal of the History of Collections* 19 (2).
- Chakrabarty, D. 2000. *Deprovincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chambers, I. 2008. *Mediterranean Crossings: The Politics of an Interrupted Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Chastel, A. 1996. L'Invention de l'Inventaire. In A. Girard and G. Gentil (eds.), *André Malraux minister: Les Affaires Culturelles au temps d'André Malraux*. Paris: La Documentation française.
- Coarelli, F. 1965.
- Cohn, B. 1996. *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Colla, E. 2007. *Conflicted Antiquities. Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Connelly, J.B. 2014. *The Parthenon Enigma*. New York: Knopf.
- Conversi, D. 2009. Art, Nationalism, and War: Political Futurism in Italy (1909-1944). *Sociology Compass*, 3/1: 92–117.
- Cooley, A.E. 2003. *Pompeii. Duckworth Archaeological Histories*. London: Duckworth.
- Cortelazzo, M. and P. Zolli 1988. *Dizionario etimologico della lingua italiana*. Bologna: Zanichelli.
- Choay, F. 2001. *The Invention of the Historic Monument*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Crane, D. 2000. *Fashion and its Social Agendas: Class, Gender, and Identity in Clothing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Curzi, V. 2004. *Bene Culturale e Pubblica Utilità*. Bologna: Minerva Edizioni.
- D'Alconzo, P. 1999. *L'anello del re: Tutela del patrimonio storico-artistico nel Regno di Napoli (1734-1830)*. Florence: Edizioni Firenze.
- Dante, U. 2013. *Le Bandiere e I Canti. Spettacolo, cultura e politica nella storia d'Italia*. Milan: Mursia.
- De Jong, F. and M. Rowlands (eds.) 2007. *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*. Walnut Creek CA: Left Coast Press.



- Delaney, C. 1991. *The Seed and the Soil. Gender and Cosmology in Turkish Village Society*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- della Porta, D. 2001. A judges' revolution? Political corruption and the judiciary in Italy. *European Journal of Political Research* 39: 1-21.
- della Porta, D. and A. Vannucci. 2007. Corruption and anti-corruption: The political defeat of 'Clean Hands' in Italy. *West European Politics* 30 (4): 820-853.
- della Porta, D. and L. Zamponi. 2013. The policing of protest on October 15th, global day of action: The case of Italy. *Policing and society* 23 (1): 65-80.
- de Felice, R. 2008. *Mussolini il duce, 1929-1940*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi Editore.
- Díaz-Andreu, M. and T. Champion. 1996. Nationalism and archaeology in Europe: an introduction. In M. Díaz-Andreu and T. Champion (eds.), *Nationalism and Archaeology in Europe*, 1–23. Boulder: Westview.
- Dickie, J. 1999. *Darkest Italy: The nation and stereotypes of the Mezzogiorno, 1860-1900*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Domínguez Rubio, F. 2014. "Materials for cultural sociology: Docile and unruly objects." *Unpublished manuscript under review*.
- Douglas, M. 1966. *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo*. London: Routledge and Keegan Paul.
- Droit, R.-P. 2005. *Humanity in the Making: Overview of the Intellectual History of UNESCO 1945–2005*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Duara, P. 1996. *Rescuing History from the Nation*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Duggan, C. 2007. *The Force of Destiny: A History of Italy since 1796*. London: Allen Lane.
- Duncan, C. 1995. *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums*. New York.
- Dwyer, E. 2010. *Pompeii's Living Statues: Ancient Roman Lives Stolen from Death*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Edensor, T. 2002. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Edgeworth, M. 2003. *Acts of Discovery: An ethnography of archaeological practice*, BAR International Series, vol. 1131. Oxford: Archaeopress.
- Emerson, R. M. 1995. *Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Feeley-Harnik, G. 1996. "Response to the motion," in T. Ingold (ed.), *Key Debates in Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Fehérváry, K. 2013. *Politics in Color and Concrete: Socialist Materialities and the Middle-class in Hungary, 1950-2000* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press).
- Forcucci, L. 2010. Battle for Births: The Fascist Pronatalist Campaign in Italy 1925 to 1938. *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe* 10(1): 4-13.
- Forgacs, D. 2001. Scenarios for the Digital Age: Convergence, Personalization, Exclusion. *Modern Italy* 6(2): 129-139.
- Forgacs, D. 2014. *Italy's Margins: Social Exclusion and Nation Formation since 1861*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Forgacs, D. and S. Gundle. 2007. *Mass culture and Italian society from fascism to the Cold War*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Foucault, M. 1980. *Power/Knowledge*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Foucault, M. 1995. *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Galanakis, Y. 2008. Doing Business: two unpublished letters from Athanasios Rhusopoulos to Arthur Evans in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. In D. Kurtz (ed.), *Essays in Classical Archaeology for Eleni Hatzivassiliou*, 297-309. Oxford: Archeopress.
- Galaty, M. and C. Watkinson (eds.). 2004. *Archaeology under dictatorship*. New York: Kluwer Academic.
- Gellner, E. 1964. *Thought and Change*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gentile, E. 2003. *The Struggle for Modernity: Nationalism, Futurism, and Fascism*. New York: Praeger.
- Gentile, E. 2009. *La Grande Italia. The Myth of the Nation in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.
- Gerstenblith, P. 2008. *Art, Cultural Heritage, and the Law*. 2<sup>nd</sup> edition. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press.
- Goode, J.F. 2007. *Negotiating for the Past: Archaeology, Nationalism, and Diplomacy in the Middle East, 1919-1941*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.
- Goody, J. 2007. *The Theft of History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gorski, P. 2003. *The Disciplinary Revolution: Calvinism and the Rise of the State in Early Modern Europe*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

- Gosden, C. 2005. What do Objects Want? *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 12(3) 193-211.
- Griswold, W., McDonnell, T. and Mangione, G. 2013. Objects, Words, and Bodies in Space: Bringing Materiality into Cultural Analysis. *Qualitative Sociology* 36 (4): 343-364.
- Gur, A. 2010. Political Excavations of the Anatolian Past: Nationalism and Archaeology in Turkey. In R. Boytner et al. (eds.), *Controlling the Past, Owning the Future: Political Uses of Archaeology in the Middle East*, 68-89. Tucson: The University of Arizona Press.
- Gur, A. 2007. Stories in Three Dimensions: Archeological Museums and National Identity. In E. Ozyurek (ed.), *Politics of Public Memory in Turkey*, 40-69. Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.
- Hales, S. and J. Paul (eds.) 2011. *Pompeii in the Public Imagination from its Rediscovery to Today*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hamilakis, Y. 2007. *The Nation and its Ruins: Antiquity, Archaeology and National Imagination in Greece*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Harrison, R. 2013. *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. New York: Routledge.
- Heatherington, T. 2014. Delinquent Zones: Insecurities, Moralities, Natures. Unpublished paper delivered to the C21 Fellows Seminar on Changing Climates, University of Wisconsin-Madison. January 29, 2014.
- Herzfeld, M. 2005. *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation State*. London: Routledge.
- Herzfeld, M. 2009. *Evicted from Eternity: The Restructuring of Modern Rome*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Hirschman, D., E. Berrey and F. Rose-Greenland 2012. "Dequantifying Diversity. Admissions and Affirmative Action at the University of Michigan." Paper presented jointly to the Sociology of Knowledge panel, American Sociological Association annual meeting, Denver, CO. August 2012.
- Hixson, W.L. 1997. *Parting the Curtain: Propaganda, Culture and the Cold War, 1945-1961*. New York Macmillan.
- Hobsbawm, E. and T. Ranger (eds.) 1983. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hook, H. 2010. *Empires of the Imagination: Politics, War, and the Arts in the British World, 1750-1850*. London: Profile Books.
- Hooper-Greenhill, E. 1992. *Museums and the Shaping of Knowledge*. London: Routledge.

- Huet, V. 1999. Napoleon I: A New Augustus? In C. Edwards (ed.), *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Cultures*, pp. 53-69. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hughes-Hallett, L. 2013. *Gabriele d'Annunzio. Poet, Seducer, and Preacher of War*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Hunt, L.A. 1984. *Politics, Culture, and Class in the French Revolution*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Hutchings, P. 2001. *The Criminal Spectre in Law, Literature and Aesthetics: Incriminating Subjects*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hylland Eriksen, T. 2001. Between Universalism and Relativism: A critique of the UNESCO concept of culture. In J.K. Cowan (ed.), *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspectives*, pp. 127-148. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ingamells, J. 1996. Discovering Italy: British Travellers in the Eighteenth Century. In A. Wilton and I. Bignamini (eds.), *Grand Tour: The Lure of Italy in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 21-30. London: Tate Gallery Publishing.
- Ingold, T. 1996. *Key Debates in Anthropology*. London: Routledge.
- Isbell, J.C. 1994. *The Birth of a European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Staël's De l'Allemagne, 1810-1813*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Isman, F. 2009. *I predatori dell'arte perduta. Il saccheggio dell'archeologia in Italia*. Milan: Skira editore.
- Jasanoff, M. 2005. *Edge of Empire: Lives, Culture, and Conquest in the East, 1750-1850*. New York: Random House.
- Jones, P. 2013. *Myth, Memory, Trauma: Rethinking the Stalinist Past in the Soviet Union, 1953-70*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Joy, C. 2012. *The Politics of Heritage Management in Mali*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Kohl, P. and C. Fawcett (eds.) 1995. *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kowalski, A. 2007. State Power as Field Work. Culture and practice in the French Survey of Historic Landmarks. In R. Sennett and C. Calhoun (eds.), *Practicing Culture*, pp. 82-104. London and New York: Routledge.
- Labadi, S. 2007. Representations of the Nation and Cultural Diversity in Discourses on World Heritage. *Journal of Social Archaeology* 7(2): 147-70.

- Lachmann, R. 1988. Graffiti as Career and Ideology. *American Journal of Sociology* 94(2): 229-50.
- Lamont, M. 1992. *Money, Morals, and Manners. The Culture of the French and the American Upper-Middle Class*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Landriani, L. 2010. *Modelli di gestione per le aziende dei beni culturali. L'esperienza delle Soprintendenze "speciali"*. Milan: FrancoAngeli s.r.l.
- Lemonnier, P. 2012. *Mundane Objects: Materiality and Non-Verbal Communication*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Leoussi, A. 1998. *Nationalism and Classicism. The Classical Body as National Symbol in 19th Century England and France*. New York: St Martin's Press.
- Leoussi, A. 2009. From civic to ethnic classicism: the cult of the Greek body in late nineteenth-century French society and art. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 16 (3/4): 393-442. September/December 2009.
- Lombardi, P.C. 2011 [1950]. *Per le antichità e belle arti* (Discorso pronunciato alla Camera dei Deputati nella Seduta del 27 Sett 1950). Rome: Biblioteca del Senato.
- Lombardi-Diop, C. and C. Romeo (eds.) 2012. *Postcolonial Italy: Challenging National Homogeneity*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Loveman, M. 2005. The Modern State and the Primitive Accumulation of Symbolic Power. *American Journal of Sociology* 110(6): 1651-83.
- Lowenthal, D. 1985. *The Past is a Foreign Country*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Manconi, L. 1998. "Campanilismo." *L'identità degli italiani*: 200.
- Mann, M. 1986. *Sources of Social Power: a History of Power from the Beginning to A.D.1760*, Vol. I, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marashi, A. 2008. *Nationalizing Iran. Culture, Power and the State, 1870-1940*. Seattle: University of Washington Press.
- Marchand, S. 1996. *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750-1970*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Marín-Aguilera, B. 2012. Italy, a huge open-air museum: "Tombaroli" at Cerveteri and Tarquinia. *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Best Practices in World Heritage: Archaeology*: 563-579.
- McClintock, A. 1995. *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest*. New York and London: Routledge.

- McDonnell, T. 2010. Cultural Objects as Objects: Materiality, urban space, and the interpretation of AIDS campaigns in Accra, Ghana. *American Journal of Sociology* 115 (6): 1800-1852.
- Merryman, J.H. 2006. *Imperialism, Arts and Restitution*. Cambridge University Press.
- Meskell, L. M. 2002. Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology. *Anthropological Quarterly* 75(3): 557–74.
- Meskell, L. 2013. UNESCO and the Fate of the World Heritage Indigenous Peoples Council of Experts (WHIPCOE). *International Journal of Cultural Property* 20: 155-174.
- Meyer, E. 2004. *Legitimacy and Law in the Roman World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Miles, M. 2008. *Art as Plunder: The Ancient Origins of Debate about Cultural Property*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Mitchell, T. 2002. *Rule of Experts: Egypt, Techno-Politics, Modernity*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Moe, N. 2002. *The View from Vesuvius: Italian Culture and the Southern Question*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Molé, N.J. 2011. *Labor Disorders in Neoliberal Italy*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.
- Moretti Sgubini, A.M. (ed.) 2000. *La Collezione Augusto Castellani*. Rome: “L’Erma” di Bretschneider.
- Mosse, G. 1985. *Nationalism and Sexuality. Respectability and abnormal sexuality in Europe*. Howard Fertig Publishers.
- Muehlebach, A.K. 2012. *The Moral Neoliberal: Welfare and citizenship in Italy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mukerji, C. 1983. *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Nas, P.J.M. 2002. Masterpieces of Oral and Intangible Culture: Reflections on the UNESCO World Heritage List. *Current Anthropology* 43 (1): 139-148.
- Nora, P. 1989. Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de mémoire*. *Representations* 26 (Spring): 7-25.
- Nørskov, V. 2002. Greek Vases for Sale: Some statistical evidence. In Brodie, N.J. and K.W. Tubb (eds.) *Illicit Antiquities: The Theft of Culture and the Extinction of Archaeology*, pp. 23-37. London: Routledge.

Nye, J. 2005. *Soft Power*. New York.

Panella, C. 2011. The social Life of (Plundered) Things. Les contraintes du “donner à voir”. In G. Compagnon (ed.), *Halte au Pillage! Le patrimoine archéologique en péril, du détecteur de métaux au huaquero*, 391-407. Arles: Errance.

Patriarca, S. 1996. *Numbers and Nationhood: Writing Statistics in Nineteenth Century Italy*. New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patriarca, S. 2001. Italian Neopatriotism: Debating National Identity in the 1990s. *Modern Italy* 6 (1).

Patriarca, S. 2010. *Italian Vices. Nation and Character from the Risorgimento to the Republic*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Patriarca, S. and L. Riall. 2012. *The Risorgimento Revisited: Nationalism and culture in nineteenth-century Italy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Pelegatti, P. and M. Bell 1995. *Antichità senza provenienza*. Atti della Tavola Rotonda, American Academy in Rome (Feb. 1995).

Perticarari, L. and A.M. Giuntani. 1986. *I segreti di un tombarolo*. Milan: Rusconi.

Piattoni, S. 2001. Clientelism in Historical and Comparative Perspective. In Piattoni, S. (ed.), *Clientelism, Interests, and Democratic Representation: The European experience in historical and comparative perspective*, pp. 1-30. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Porter, T. 1995. *Trust in Numbers: The Pursuit of Objectivity in Science and Public Life*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Reid, D. M. 2002. *Whose pharaohs? Archaeology, museums, and Egyptian national identity from Napoleon to World War I*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Riall, L. 1994. *The Italian Risorgimento: State, society, and national unification*. London: Routledge.

Riall, L. 2009. *Risorgimento: The History of Italy from Napoleon to Nation-State*. Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Ricciardi, A. 2012. *After La Dolce Vita: A Cultural Prehistory of Berlusconi's Italy*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Ridley, R. 1992. *The Eagle and the Spade Archaeology in Rome during the Napoleonic Era*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rivera, L. 2008. Managing “spoiled” national identity. *American Sociological Review* 73 (4): 613-634.

- Rodotà, S. 1996. Magistratura e politica in Italia. In E. Bruti Liberati, A. Ceretti & A. Giasanti (eds.) *Governo dei giudici*, pp. 17-29. Milan: Feltrinelli.
- Romani, G. 2002. Interpreting the Risorgimento: Blasetti's "1860" and the Legacy of Motherly Love. *Italica* 79 (3): 391-404.
- Rose-Greenland, F. 2012. "Creating the Cultural Nation: *Tombaroli*, state power and Italian antiquities." Paper presented at the Transnational Organized Crime: Italian Connections conference. American University of Rome, Rome, Italy. November 2012.
- Rose-Greenland, F. 2013a. Seeing the Unseen: Prospective Loading and Knowledge Forms in Archaeological Discovery. *Qualitative Sociology* 36(3): 251-277.
- Rose-Greenland, F. 2013b. The Parthenon Marbles as Icons of Nationalism in 19<sup>th</sup> Century Britain: From pre-national to supra-national. *Nations and Nationalism* 19 (4): 654-673.
- Rose-Greenland, F. and F.M. Göçek. 2012. Archaeology. In E. Ramsamy, A.L. Stanton, P.J. Seybolt, and C. Elliott (eds.), *Cultural Sociology of the Middle East, Asia, and Africa*, 13-16. London: SAGE Publications.
- Rowell, D. 2012. *Paris: The 'New Rome' of Napoleon I*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Rowlands, M.J. and de Jong, F. 2007. Reconsidering Heritage and Memory. In de Jong, F. and M.J. Rowlands (ed.), *Reclaiming Heritage: Alternative Imaginaries of Memory in West Africa*, pp. 13-30. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
- Rush, L. and L. Benedettini. 2012. *The Carabinieri TPC, an Introduction and Brief History*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Rutledge, S. 2012. *Ancient Rome as a Museum: Power, Identity, and the Culture of Collecting*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Schnapp, A. 1997. *The Discovery of the Past*. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
- Schneider, J. (ed.) 1998. *Italy's 'Southern Question': Orientalism in One Country*. Oxford and New York: Berg.
- Scott, J.C. 1999. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Serio, M. 2003. *Istituzioni e politiche per i beni culturali. Materiali per una storia*. Bologna: Bononia University Press.
- Settis, S. 2007 [2002]. *Italia S.p.A. L'assalto al patrimonio cultural*. Torino: Giulio Einaudi editore.
- Sewell, Jr., W.H. 1996. Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology. In T. McDonald (ed.), *The Historic turn in the Human Sciences*, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.



- Silberman, N.A. 1990. *Between Past and Present: Archaeology, Ideology, and Nationalism in the Modern Middle East*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Smith, A. 1999. *Myths and Memories of the Nation*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, A. 2008. *The Cultural Foundations of Nations. Hierarchy, Covenant and Republic*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Smith, A. 2009. *Ethno-symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach*. London: Routledge.
- Smith, K. L. 2005. Looting and the Politics of Archaeological knowledge in Northern Peru. *Ethnos* 74 (2): 149-70.
- Steinmetz, G. 1999. Introduction. In Steinmetz, G. (ed.), *State/Culture: State-Formation after the Cultural Turn*, pp. 1-49. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Stiebing, W.H. 1994. *Uncovering the Past. A history of archaeology*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Stonor Saunders, F. 1999. *The Cultural Cold War. The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters*. New York: The New Press.
- Surak, K. 2013. *Making Tea, Making Japan. Cultural Nationalism in Practice*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Terrenato, N. 2001. Ancestor Cults: the perception of ancient Rome in Italian culture. In R. Hingley (ed.), *Images of Rome: Perceptions of Ancient Rome in Europe and the United States in the Modern Age*, 71-89. Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series vol. 44.
- Thoden van Velzen, D. 1996. The World of Tuscan Tomb Robbers: Living with the Local Community and the Ancestors. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 5: 111-126.
- Tilley C. 2004. *The Materiality of Stone: Explorations in Landscape Phenomenology*. Oxford: Berg.
- Tilly, C. 1992. *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990-1992*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Tong, E. 1995. Thirty years of Chinese archaeology (1949-1979). In P. Kohl and C. Fawcett (eds.), *Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology*, pp. 177-197. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Trigger, B.G. 2006 [1989]. *A History of Archaeological Thought*. Second edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Troilo, S. 2005. *La patria e la memoria. Tutela e patrimonio culturale nell'Italia unita*, Milano: Electa.
- Troilo, S. 2011. National Museums in Italy: A Matter of Multifaceted Identity. *Building National Museums in Europe 1750-2010*. Conference proceedings from *EuNaMus, European National Museums: Identity Politics, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen*, Bologna 28-30 April 2011. Peter Aronsson & Gabriella Elgenius (eds) EuNaMus Report No 1. Pages 461-495.
- Tunbridge, J.E. and G.J. Ashworth. 1996. *Dissonant Heritage: The management of the past as a resource in conflict*. London: John Wiley & Sons.
- Vašiček, Z. and J. Malina. 1990. *Archaeology Yesterday and Today. The development of archaeology in the sciences and humanities*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wagner-Pacifici, R. 2005. *The Art of Surrender: Decomposing Sovereignty at Conflict's End*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Watson, P. and C. Todeschini. 2007. *The Medici Conspiracy: The Illicit Journey of Looted Antiquities – from Italy's Tomb Raiders to the World's Greatest Museums*. New York: PublicAffairs.
- Waxman, S. 2008. *Loot: The Battle over the Stolen Treasures of the Ancient World*. New York: Henry Holt & Co.
- Weiss, R. 1988. *The Renaissance Discovery of Classical Antiquity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Whimster, S. 2003. *The Essential Weber*. London: Routledge.
- Winks, R. 1987. *Cloak and Gown: Scholars in the Secret War, 1939-1961*. New York: William Murrow.
- Witucki, B. 2011. Site, Sight, and Symbol: Pompeii and Vesuvius in *Corinne, or Italy*. In S. Hales and J. Paul (eds.), *Pompeii in the Public Imagination: From its Rediscovery to Today*, pp. 62-74. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yasaitis, K.E. 2005. NAGPRA: A Look Back Through the Litigation. *Journal of Land, Resources, and Environmental Law* 25: 259-285.
- Zanardi, B. 1999. Introduzione. Le attività di tutela dopo il 1963. In B. Zanardi, *Conservazione, restauro e tutela. 24 dialoghi*. Milan: Skira, 9-52.
- Zerubavel, Y. 1995. *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- Zolberg, V. 1994. "An Elite Experience for Everyone": Art Museums, the Public, and Cultural Literacy. In D.J. Sherman and I. Rogoff (eds.), *Museum Culture. Histories, Discourses, Spectacles*, pp. 49-65. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

Zubrzycki, G. 2001. "We, the Polish Nation": Ethnic and civic visions of nationhood in Post-Communist constitutional debates. *Theory and Society* 30: 629-668.

Zubrzycki, G. 2006. *Crosses of Auschwitz: Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Zubrzycki, G. 2010. National culture, national identity and the culture(s) of the nation. In Grindstaff, Laura, John R. Hall and Ming-cheng Lo (eds.), *Sociology of Culture: a Handbook*. New York: Routledge.

Zubrzycki, G. 2011. History and the National Sensorium: Making sense of Polish mythology. *Qualitative Sociology* 3: 21-57.

Zubrzycki, G. 2013. Aesthetic revolt and the remaking of national identity in Québec, 1960-1969. *Theory and Society* 42: 423-475.