


HERITAGE STUDIES

Methods and Approaches

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WALKING A FINE LINE

Obtaining sensitive information using a valid methodology

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Introduction

In the global marketplace for cultural property there are illegal elements at every stage. Individuals clandestinely pillage archaeological sites. The artefacts then move through a series of both legal and illegal conduits to arrive at a salesroom or auction house for sale to private collectors or museums that turn a blind eye to the question of provenance (archaeological findspot). Investigating this movement of artefacts formed the focus of my PhD research (Kersel 2006). This research is both multi-sited and multi-vocal and the ethnographic enquiry had to reflect those realities. In this chapter the methods of investigation will be illustrated through a series of data-collection techniques employed while conducting field research in Israel and the Palestinian Authority (hereafter the PA). Through trial and error during interviews with looters, dealers, collectors, government employees, archaeologists and academics, a methodology was employed to explore the efficacy of legally sanctioned antiquities markets in combating the illegal excavation of archaeological sites and the resulting illicit trade in antiquities.

Framing the debate

At its most elemental there are two sides to the debate over whether to sell antiquities in the marketplace. Those who support the trade in antiquities include dealers, collectors, museums and some archaeologists. They believe that international trade is inherently desirable and support the notion that many, if not most, artefacts are redundant and lack special archaeological

significance or even cultural importance for the archaeologically rich nation. Advocates of this position support a legal trade in antiquities, asserting that by making it illegal, the trade is sent underground, creating a black market ensuring both a lack of control and inflated prices. They see parallels to the world of drug and arms trafficking. From this perspective, a legally sanctioned sale of antiquities will put the illegal trade and looters out of business (Marks 1995; Merryman 1995; Pearlstein 1986; Shanks 2001).

On the other side of the debate are those who oppose a trade in antiquities – legal or illegal. Comprised mainly of archaeologists, national governments, some museum employees and cultural preservationists, this group claims a direct causal relationship between the demand for antiquities and the looting of archaeological sites in order to supply that demand. For them the true culprits in the illicit trade in antiquities are the collectors (Elia 1993; Renfrew 1993), for if there were no demand (or no collecting) there would be little or no need for looting. As a result, they favour a total ban on all trade in antiquities in order to protect the world's cultural heritage from destruction.

This debate framed my PhD project. The legally sanctioned market in Israel (see Text box 10.1) was the primary case study for an examination of the market, with a particular focus on understanding the effects its legality or illegality appears to have on site destruction and on archaeological practice in the region. Israel is unique in the region as one of the only countries with a legally sanctioned sale of antiquities (Figure 10.1). An examination of this case study in Israel and its effects on the PA outlined the scope and complexity of the market, situating the view of archaeologists as one among a multiplicity of claims about the use, meaning and value of the antiquities.

In order to understand the trade in antiquities and recognise its effects on the archaeological landscape, it was imperative that I explore the issues, witness the trade, and speak with those directly involved with the production, distribution and consumption of artefacts. Archaeologists, collectors (whether tourists, high-end or museums), dealers, government employees, museum professionals and a group of miscellaneous stakeholders (including architects, conservators, educators and lawyers) – all of whom express a degree of entitlement to the disposition of artefacts – were consulted throughout the course of my research. The fundamental question of whether there was a discernible relationship between the demand for archaeological goods (in the legal market) and looting of archaeological sites to supply that demand guided the enquiry. After arriving at what I thought was a research question that would contribute to the ongoing debate surrounding the disposition of the material remains of the past, the next tasks were to gather data, assess the market, synthesise the results and arrive at some conclusions. Employing a valid methodology was among my biggest challenges. This chapter recounts the travails of an archaeologist in the world of ethnography.

Text box 10.1 Legal trade – how it works

Under current legislation in Israel (Antiquities Law 5738–1978) you can buy and subsequently export archaeological artefacts from dealers licensed by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) if the artefacts derive from collections that predate the 1978 law. Whether the licensed antiquities shop is in the lobby of a high-priced hotel or in a small alley of the Old City, one of its main purposes is the sale of antiquities. Each licensee has to apply, pay a fee and receive approval from the IAA anti-theft unit in order to obtain a licence to deal in antiquities. In each case the licensed shop has to display its licence prominently and comply with the terms of the 1978 Antiquities Law. Whether or not the dealer supplies a 'certificate of authenticity' is entirely up to the individual, but they are required to provide an export licence (issued by the IAA) for any object they sell if the purchaser requests one. The licensed dealer sends a digital image or takes the object to the IAA offices, where the relevant authorities check the ID number and description against the dealer inventory and then issue an export licence. Both the dealer and the IAA keep track of the inventory via a register. The onus is on the purchaser to request an export licence; if no licence is issued then there is no record of the transaction on file with the IAA. This provides the crucial opportunity to 'launder' recently looted archaeological material through the exchange of register numbers. Theoretically a member of the IAA anti-theft unit (those charged with oversight and licensing of the legal market) can walk into any licensed shop at any time and ask to see the dealer register, which they can then check against the store inventory. In practice this is very unlikely because there is only one person assigned to monitor all sixty dealers throughout the country, and this is only one of their duties for the IAA. This results in fractured oversight and very few inspections. From interviews with some sixty representatives from the IAA and the dealing community it is apparent that despite an overt legal façade of artefact registers, licensing systems and regular inspections, there are covert aspects to meeting demand for archaeological artefacts from the Near East.

Arriving at a methodology

Traditional approaches to fieldwork interviews are based on the assumptions that:

- 1 the interviewer is skilled and can gain and provide access to knowledge, and
- 2 there is knowledge to be gained.

As a newcomer to ethnography and interviewing techniques, I sought the aid of professionals in the UK and in the Middle East¹ in order to arrive at a standard methodological practice which would provide relevant data to answer the basic questions surrounding the efficacy of a legal trade. The research

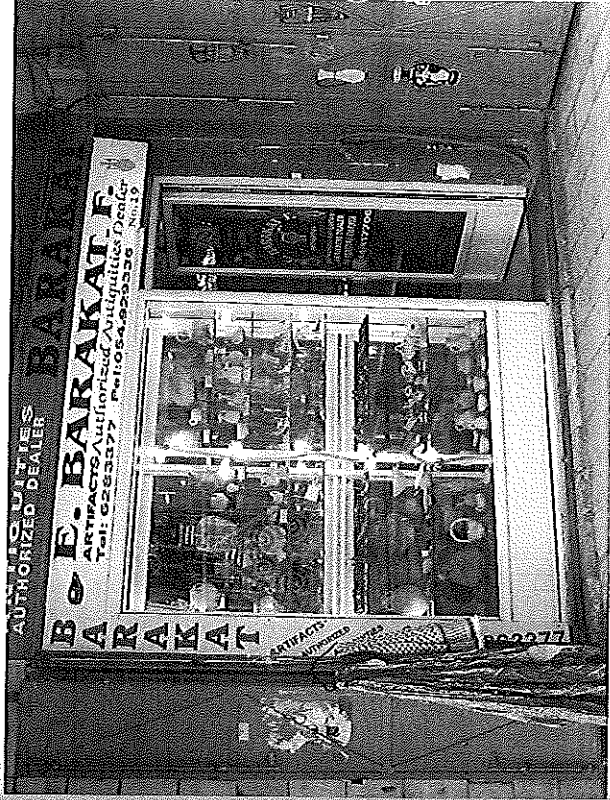


Figure 10.1 Licensed antiquities shop sign, Jerusalem (photo by the author)

conducted for this PhD is what Marcus refers to as a multi-sited ethnography – an ethnography that moves from its conventional single-sited location, to multiple sites of observation and participation that cross-cur dichotomies such as the local and the global, the life world and the system' (Marcus 1995: 96). Following the global pathway of an artefact through the specific economic activity of the legal market is fundamentally a multi-sited effort. The trade dictates the interview process and participants: looters, middlemen, dealers, archaeologists, collectors, tourists, government officials, lawyers, museum professionals and conservators situated in Israel, Jordan, the PA, the UK and the US. This work is both multi-sited and multi-vocal and the ethnographic enquiry had to reflect those realities.

The methods used for this research project included: the active interview² process; ethnographic analysis; participant observation; and semi-structured interviews. As a social process, fieldwork necessitates relational events which are unique to each situation. From designing the research and establishing goals, to collecting and analysing and publishing the data, each aspect of fieldwork is dependent on interaction between the interviewer and the various stakeholders. Fieldwork relationships do not just happen, but are the outcome of negotiation between the social researcher and the actors in the field (Coffey 1999). Following Holstein and Gubrium's (1995) discussion of active interviews the aim of the present methodological practice was to

develop a relationship with the various stakeholders in order to gain information about the legal market for antiquities. Consistently I reminded myself that both the interviewer and interviewee are actively constructing a narrative, a new entity or product – the ethnography.

A total of ninety-four interviews were conducted in Israel, Jordan, the PA, the UK and the USA between January 2003 and October 2005. Interviews were carried out in a conversational style in an attempt to acquire a better understanding of the antiquities trade networks. As an active participant in the interview process, my own age, my education, my gender and my background as a Near Eastern archaeologist created possible biases with the potential to influence how each interview was constructed and negotiated.

Formal interviews were semi-structured and initiated by developing what social scientists refer to as an interview guide (deMarras 2003; Holstein and Gubrium 1995), outlining a series of questions and concerns that I thought would best address the issue of the legal market (see Text box 10.2). The interview guide provides the interviewer with a set of predetermined questions clarifying their goals and the best approach to engaging participants in conversation. Use of the guide varied from one interview to the next, providing the crux of some interviews and remaining virtually ignored during others (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). I tested prototype questionnaires on local (British) stakeholders and professional colleagues. This testing process was not designed to determine the statistical reliability of the questions, but rather to assure that the questions were relevant, that the wording was clear and that none of the questions was too intrusive or offensive to any of the potential participants. For example, early versions of the interview guide used too many technical terms, were jargon-laden, and some of the questions posed to dealers about income generated from the trade were too personal. As a result, some dealers consulted (long-time acquaintances) suggested more appropriate alternative wording.

The facility of conducting questionnaire-style interviews became apparent early on: these often elicited single words or answers of extreme brevity. A much more productive approach was to start with one relevant question – *Do you think there should be a legal sale of antiquities?* Doing so at the outset and then allowing the respondent time to answer, digress, tell stories and then return to the original question at hand evoked more comprehensive answers, additional information and nuance. Questions in the interview guide could be revisited if the conversation flagged or veered away from the subject. The active interview process allowed for flexibility but also kept the researcher on track answering questions and providing information relevant to the overarching thesis topic.

Armed with a purportedly reliable methodology, the next step was to head into the field and to test my hypotheses and the methods. One of the first hurdles in the field was to identify the stakeholders involved with the trade and then get them to agree to meet with me.

Text box 10.2 The interview guide

Profile data sheet

Date _____
 Interviewer _____
 Site Visit Yes _____ No _____
 Name _____
 Address _____
 Telephone _____
 Email _____
 Position _____

THE BIG QUESTION: Should there be a legal sale of antiquities in Israel?

A. Selection Criteria

Collector _____ Dealer _____ Archaeologist _____ Looter _____ Other _____
 Near Eastern archaeological focus Yes _____ No _____
 Antiquities Yes _____ No _____
 Years in the field _____

B. Dealers/Small Businesses

1. Institutional Profile

Type of organisation Profit _____ Non-profit _____
 How long in the business _____ years
 Family business Yes _____ No _____
 Officially sanctioned by the IAA Yes _____ No _____
 Officially sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism Yes _____ No _____
 How many employees _____ Full time _____ Part time _____
 Finance Officer Yes _____ No _____ Full time _____ Part time _____
 Stakeholders _____ Board of Directors _____ Shareholders _____
 Business computerised Yes _____ No _____

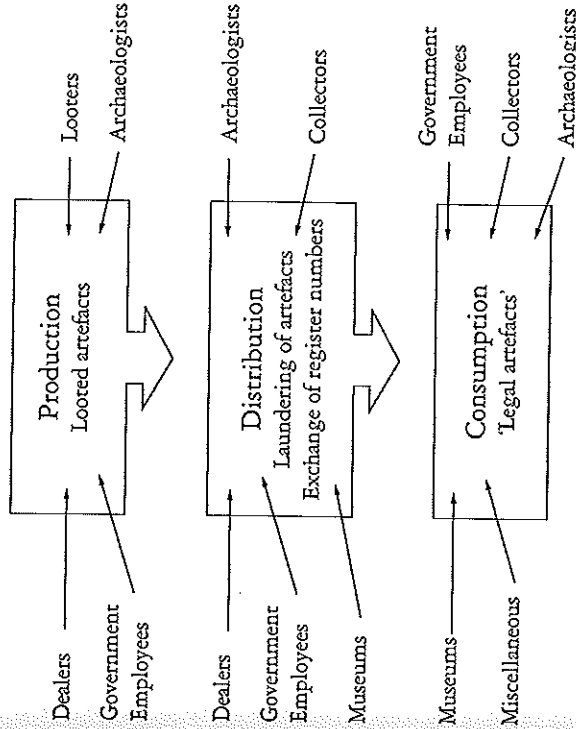
Into the field

Identifying stakeholders

The various stakeholders involved with the trade were identified as shown in Table 10.1.

Each stakeholder in the legal trade in antiquities believes that they have a right to possess, or protect, or purvey (or any combination of the three) archaeological artefacts from the region. The looters, who may claim an inherent right to the land and what lies in the soil, may have no perceived cultural affinity to the artefacts in question, but they recognise that middlemen will pay for the material they illegally excavate. Middlemen assert that they are both meeting consumer demand and adding to the economic stability of the PA (where much of the looting takes place) by providing the looters with added income. Dealers in Jerusalem are providing a service by meeting consumer demand. The tourist wants to take home a memento of his or her visit to the area that will serve as a symbol of a past visit to an important, often sacred, place (Dominguez 1986). Museums and institutions with educational mandates have a vested interest in purchasing artefacts, increasing their collections for the purposes of scholarly study and edification of the public. Architects, conservators, educators and lawyers may play a role in the trade, through valuing, conserving, researching or

Table 10.1 Stakeholders in the production–distribution–consumption model in Israel



- Use of a registry system Yes _____ No _____
- Profit margin Yes _____ No _____
- 2. Consumer Profile
- Are the buyers generally tourists? Yes _____ No _____
- Are the buyers generally long time collectors? Yes _____ No _____
- What countries are they from (or what citizenship)? _____
- Do you have repeat customers? Yes _____ No _____
- How much do they generally spend? _____
- How many items do they purchase (per visit)? _____
- How often do you sell a "high end" item? _____
- Do you do much business online? Yes _____ No _____
- If yes, what kinds of items are purchased online, from what countries? _____
- How has the recent uprising affected your business?
Less _____ More via the internet _____
- Do buyers routinely ask about provenance? Yes _____ No _____
- Is there a recent trend for more consumers to ask about provenance?
Yes _____ No _____
- Should dealers, shops and/or auction houses be required to provide provenance?
Yes _____ No _____
- Do you think licensing dealer schemes would be an effective means of reducing the illicit trade in art?
Yes _____ No _____ Why or Why not? _____
- Is the permit/licensing process difficult? Yes _____ No _____
- Are there regular inspections by the IAA or the Ministry of Tourism?
Yes _____ No _____ If Yes, How Often _____
- Where do you get most of your material from? _____
- How would you characterise the role of antiquities dealers in the market place? _____
- Do you find market trends occurring according to "block buster shows" at local museums? Yes _____ No _____

legislative efforts. The government employees of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA), the Jordanian Department of Antiquities and the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities are attempting to protect the past for the future, for the benefit of each of their respective publics. Once the stakeholders were identified the next hurdle was convincing people to meet with me.

Gaining access

The problem of obtaining access to data looms large in ethnography. This problem persists throughout the data-collection phase, but is often most acute in initial negotiations during the 'first days in the field' (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). Negotiating access, data collection and analysis are not distinct phases of research, but represent significantly overlapping avenues of investigation. The interviewer can learn from the problems associated with making contact with people as well as from responses to the researcher's approach (Hammersley and Atkinson 1995). Negative responses were often as informative as positive responses.

The strategy of initially contacting people for a formal interview had to be modified within a week of my arrival in Jerusalem. A much more effective approach was to speak with an individual in an informal setting (tea, garden party, sports complex), laying the groundwork for a later, more formal, interview. Essentially the period of September–December 2003 was a series of informal meetings setting the stage for future work with prospective informants.

At times, particularly in the context of participant observation, people selected themselves or others for interview. Many interviewees recommended other potential participants and even offered to provide introductions when necessary. Gatekeepers³ were often encountered prior to interviewing participants who work in hierarchical sectors (governments, museums). Usually these were powerful people (superiors in the organisational structure) who attempted to select interviewees for my research. Gatekeepers were either genuinely acting in good faith or were attempting to control my access and results. This necessitated a heightened sensitivity on my part to the attempts by others to manipulate the research agenda. Meeting with participants outside their workplace was preferable in order to lessen the influence of instructional power.

Although the suggestions or control of gatekeepers were not always welcome, 'spillage' sometimes proved useful. Active interviews take advantage of informational 'spillage' from one interview to another, using the background knowledge learned from one interviewee to gain further insights from another (Holstein and Gubrium 1995). One dealer stated that some of his 'newly acquired material' came from the Bedouin, who had greater ease of movement throughout the PA and Israel. Subsequent dealers were then asked if they bought any of their material from the Bedouin. Whereas the standardised

interview would try to limit informational 'spillage' from one interview to another, active interviewing takes advantage of the growing stockpile of background knowledge that the interviewer collects in prior interviews to pose concrete questions and explore facets of respondents' circumstances that might not otherwise be investigated (Holstein and Gubrium 1995).

After an initial informal meeting or two the individual would usually agree to participate in my study, but in some instances subjects declined to take part. One response to my request for an interview was a polite but firm email: 'I am sorry but I am not a specialist in the matter you are working on.' Another reply was not quite so polite: 'I have nothing else to say on this subject. I can't think why X and Y recommended that you ask me for an interview as far as I am concerned this subject is over and boring and dead. I can't believe that you are conducting PhD research on this, stop wasting my time.' Luckily for my research these two instances were anomalies rather than the norm. A third potential participant readily agreed to meet and we arranged a time and place. I waited for almost two hours, finally concluding that the interviewee had decided against participating. Further attempts to contact the individual were met with silence. In the end I gave up.

Some interest groups were far more reticent to discuss the trade than others. Figure 10.2 illustrates the response rate of the ninety-four respondents in my research. The breakdown of the interviewee populations reflects the hesitancy on the part of looters. I approached fifteen alleged looters and none agreed to

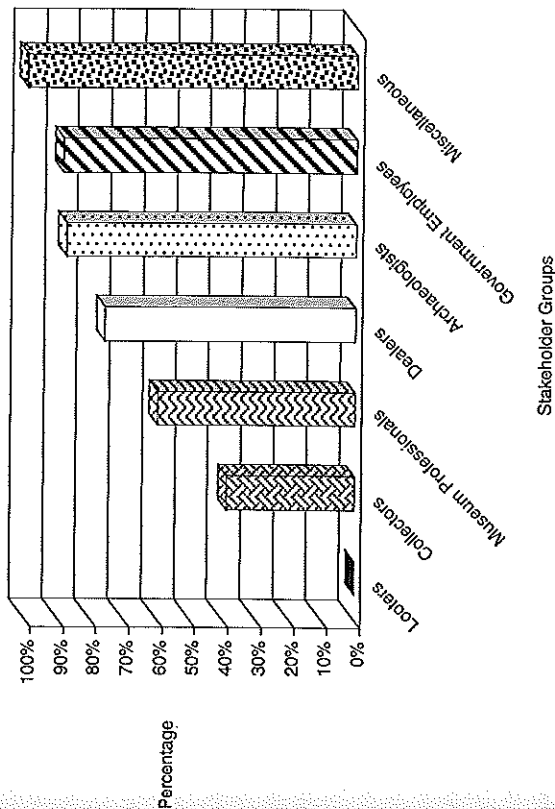


Figure 10.2 Stakeholder groups' response rates

be interviewed for this research (N=0). Only nine of the twenty-three collectors I contacted met with me or allowed me to witness an interaction in an antiquities shop (N=9 or 39 per cent). I achieved a 60 per cent response rate in the museum sphere as six of the ten museum professionals I communicated with agreed to meet to discuss the trade and their museum's acquisition policies. Surprisingly, the dealer community was one of the most willing groups to participate in the study. Thirty-five of the forty-six dealers responded positively to my request for an interview, resulting in a 76 per cent response rate. I naively assumed that they would be the least likely to participate, thinking that as an interest group they had the most to lose – their very livelihoods – by participating. Unsurprisingly the archaeologists, government employees, miscellaneous stakeholder groups (including architects, conservators, educators and lawyers) were the most sympathetic to my research and their rates of participation represent their supportive positions. Twenty-two of twenty-five (88 per cent) archaeologists, seventeen of nineteen (89 per cent) government employees and all five (100 per cent) of the miscellaneous category responded positively to my requests to meet and all graciously provided information on the legal market for antiquities in Israel.

In many cases a key determining factor in participants' positive response was the guarantee of anonymity. None wanted their name included in the study, nor did they want to be quoted, taped or photographed. Of the ninety-four people interviewed only two agreed to be 'on the record' and only one agreed to be taped. One can only sympathise with the reluctance of participants, who were being asked for potentially incriminating information (e.g. where is the archaeological material coming from?). The question then became how does the researcher reciprocate? There was, and is, no real *quid pro quo* in such research. What does this type of research offer potential informants?

Quid pro quo

There must be a shared notion of process of research in order for both the interviewer and the interviewee to benefit from the exchange (Bowler 1997: 66). Ethnographers are usually reluctant to enter into direct market exchanges of money for knowledge, but instead they usually turn to gift exchange. 'Despite all of our writings on the gift, we still tend to treat it as less problematic' (Eiyachar 2005: 31) than the exchange of cash for information. I too, was reluctant to pay for information, but in some instances I made purchases of tourist trinkets (bracelets or fridge magnets) as a gesture of goodwill. Eiyachar (2005: 31) states that 'when we enter into exchanges with informants, we can become partially absorbed in the social networks that we want to study'; this process of absorption is an important aspect of participant observation necessary to understanding the interviewees' frame of reference. Buying tourist paraphernalia allowed me greater 'access' to the dealer's realm, one of the targeted stakeholders in the trade.

Constructive outcomes were elicited by enlisting the aid of a professor⁴ of social anthropology at the Hebrew University and a seasoned programme evaluator⁵ who routinely deal with *quid pro quo* issues in interview settings. After many fruitful discussions it was decided that policy change and accountability were what this research could offer most participants, especially to those directly involved with the sale of antiquities and those monitoring such sales (Israeli and Palestinian dealers, collectors and government representatives of both states). On many occasions dealers told me that the licensing requirements enforced by the IAA were a 'huge hassle'. The unannounced visits by the IAA antiquities inspectors, conducted sporadically due to chronic understaffing, impede business for dealers. The dissemination of my research results⁶ might result in an overhaul of the current flawed licensing system in Israel, encouraging IAA policy and legislative changes.

Although Israel has a system of legally controlled venues for selling antiquities, the Palestinian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities banned the legal trade in antiquities in 1996. Given the current situation and the porous borders for artefacts, looting and destruction of archaeological sites in the PA continue unhindered, with the pillaged material often ending up in the Israeli market. The PA Ministry could benefit from the results of this study as policy options are reviewed and instituted in Gaza and the West Bank. All subsequent requests for interviews were framed to appeal to the conviction that by giving a voice to all those who have an opinion on the trade in antiquities, perhaps an equitable protection policy for the cultural heritage of the region could eventually be achieved. But this raises the question of why, in the first instance, would any of the stakeholders agree to meet with me?

Credibility

Gaining access to the various stakeholders in the legal trade of antiquities was not solely determined by a *quid pro quo*, but was also established based on personal credibility. In his research Mackenzie (2005) has stated that he was considered more 'credible' and gained greater access because he was of similar race (Caucasian), gender (male), class (middle) and education level to almost all of the interviewees. My own credibility lay in the fact that I had been an archaeologist in the region for over fifteen years and knew many of the archaeologists and government employees, and through this association was able to gain access to other potential participants.

Cultivating relationships with the dealing and the collecting communities was a more protracted process. This was not surprising because collectors and dealers had potentially 'more to lose' in terms of the possible legal repercussions of information they might provide. I started with some of the most well-known dealers and worked from there. In the Old City in Jerusalem I routinely visited the same shops, drinking countless cups of mint tea and coffee with cardamom in order to cultivate relationships. My interview guide was

translated into Arabic⁷ and copies distributed to potential participants so that they were able to see the types of questions they would be asked to discuss. A year of fieldwork in the region allowed the investment of time to cultivate relationships in order to gain more information, greater insight and a 'truer response', to borrow a phrase from Chambers.

[W]here research requires accurate portrayals of stakeholder values or opinions, qualitative ethnographic data have often proven superior to survey data, particularly in cases that involve long-term field exposure and in situations *where informants might feel at risk* or have other reasons to provide incorrect [or misleading] responses, or where their truer responses might develop over time.

(Chambers 2000: 859, my emphasis)

Most informants were at risk either of criticising the government and losing their job, facing criminal charges for dealing in illicit antiquities, or of losing their pride in purchasing an unprovenanced artefact and not asking for the proper documentation. From the outset this element of risk was understood and was incorporated into the research methodology. Once a few interviews were completed in the dealing community, word spread and I could rarely walk down the street in the Old City without someone asking me if I was going to interview them that day.

Attempts to meet with looters during the year were thwarted repeatedly either because of the wider political situation or because of distrust. After I cultivated a very good relationship with one of the dealers in the Old City, he arranged a meeting with a group of organised looters from the PA. After a year and a half, the meeting with the looters was established, but as the day of encounter neared an article appeared in the *Jerusalem Post* (Lefkowitz 2005) stating that four looters had been arrested in a night raid by the anti-theft unit of the IAA. The looters I had arranged to meet called off the meeting, perhaps apprehensive about the prospect of what I would be doing with the information I gathered.

Despite these successful inroads into the legal market for antiquities, I continued to worry about the credibility of my research. There is an inherent faith that the results are trustworthy and accurate and that the relationship between the interviewer and the respondent that evolves during the interview process has not unduly biased the account. How could this research be verified without someone revisiting all of the people and places and reinterviewing each and every participant? DeMarras (2003) states that rigour in design as well as skill in the interview enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, but is this enough?

Ken Polk,⁸ a criminologist who routinely deals with the issue of academic truthfulness and accepted methodologies of verifiability, suggested that much research of this type is guided by the 'protection of rights of human

subjects'. Under these provisions researchers are required to (K. Polk, personal communication, 2003):

- 1 notify the subjects – in the form of a plain-language statement – of the nature and purpose of this research,⁹
- 2 inform them of any risks posed by the research,
- 3 describe in detail how the informants will be identified, and
- 4 how and where the data will be stored.

A particular concern for this research was how to preserve the anonymity of informants yet maintain validity of the final results. Providing anonymity is a standard, widely accepted criminological method. The normal procedure is to assure respondents that their data will be treated anonymously and further procedures will be taken to ensure that their identity will not be revealed (K. Polk, personal communication, 2003).

Another way to obviate challenges to authenticity is to provide a written transcript of the interview for participants' annotations (K. Polk, personal communication, 2003). After every interview I provided a transcript and the subject was asked for comments and corrections on any remarks made during the meeting. This tactic proved to be an effective means of acquiring further information on various points. After seeing their words in writing, participants usually elaborated on questions, adding further insights and anecdotes. In only one instance did someone withdraw from the study after reviewing their transcript. In that particular case the subject felt that their comments about their employer were far too inflammatory and could jeopardise their job if any part of what they communicated was published.

Much of the background reading used to anchor this research indicated that ethnographers should always be aware of their 'research selves' and inherent biases. They should err on the side of reflexivity and self-criticism when assessing the results and should always take into account the ethical issues associated with their work.

Ethical dilemmas

The Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA)¹⁰ state:

Our primary responsibility is to respect and consider the welfare and human rights of all categories of people affected by decisions, programs or research in which we take part. However, we recognize that many research and practice settings involve conflicts between benefits accruing to different parties affected by our research. It is our ethical responsibility, to the extent feasible, to bring to bear on decision making, our own or that of others, information concerning the actual

or potential impacts of such activities on all whom they might affect. It is also our responsibility to assure, to the extent possible, that the views of groups so affected are made clear and given full and serious consideration by decision makers and planners, in order to preserve options and choices for affected groups.

(National Association for the Practice of Anthropology, 1988)

While no code of ethics or set of guidelines can anticipate the unique circumstances of individual field research, it was on these guiding principles that I based my research, following the general caveat of 'do no harm'. In the early stages of my fieldwork I used research assistants,¹¹ who acted on my behalf, asking probing questions of the dealer community and then providing me with the results of their findings. Based on earlier antiquities trade exposés by Lundén (2004) and Watson (1997) I assumed that the dealers would be more forthcoming with 'tourists' (my research assistants) than with me. I presented the results of my initial findings at the 'Making the Means Transparent: Research Methodologies in Archaeological Heritage Studies' conference at the University of Cambridge (the conference from which this volume emanates). During the discussion my presentation elicited much heated response from the seasoned researchers in attendance: my 'undercover' participant observation was deemed unethical. By not providing full disclosure I was in breach of the second rule of the NAPA Ethical Guideline: 'To our resource persons or research subjects we owe full and timely disclosure of the objectives, methods and sponsorship of our activities.' I subsequently revised my research methodology, no longer using 'research assistants' and instead providing each interviewee with an overview of my credentials, the objectives of the research project and the methodology for data collecting as well as a full transcript of the interview.

Another intriguing ethical and moral dilemma encountered as a result of this enquiry was whether researchers should be engaged with clients whose policies or actions might not conform to professional ethical standards or personal standards of morality and law. Does interviewing the various stakeholders implicitly condone particular behaviours? The idea that involvement is better than boycott pervades much of current applied research, but some argue that association is the equivalent of complicity and, as a consequence, recommend that applied researchers excuse themselves from a wide variety of ethically ambiguous situations (see Berreman 1991; Escobar 1991). When incriminating information is received, is it our duty to report it to the respective authorities, potentially compromising any future potential interviews, or even other related studies? How should research proceed under these circumstances? In one example used to illustrate this ethical quandary I was scheduled to meet with a representative of a government institution charged with monitoring the selling of illegal artefacts. This was not a formal interview but an information-gathering session for both parties. In the course of the

conversation I related a story of how through unrelated research¹² I was offered genuine material by an unauthorised dealer. Immediately the government employee asked for the name and location of the shop owner, which I declined to provide, noting that to do so might compromise further interviews (the network of antiquities dealers is small and very tightly knit). We were, and still are, at an impasse. In the briefing paper 'Consideration of the Potentially Negative Impact of the Publication of Factual Data about a Study Population on Such Population', Watkins (2000) states that under the AAA Code of Ethics Section III(C)(1), anthropologists are reminded that

they are not only responsible for the factual content of their statements but also must consider carefully the social and political implications of the information they disseminate. They must do everything in their power to insure that such information is well understood, properly contextualized, and responsibly utilized ... At the same time, they must be alert to the possible harm their information may cause people with whom they work.

(Watkins 2000: 1)

Bound by my membership in the AAA, I am obligated to consider the effects of this research on the study population. Additionally, Watkins warns that 'self-censorship by the researcher might be harmful both to the discipline and to the population under study' (2000: 1). In my assessment of the situation both the discipline vis-à-vis my research¹³ and the dealer in question would suffer negative effects if I reported the name of the dealer to the IAA representative.

After a year of fieldwork I returned to Cambridge laden with interview transcripts, field notes and musings on my meetings with the various stakeholders. I began my analysis by rereading the primary material, a process that reminded me of the various contexts in which the many interviews took place. I soon realised that parts of what I recorded and compiled were somewhat irrelevant and naive, a realisation that social anthropologists assured me was quite normal. After culling my data I reread the relevant material very closely in order to recapture some of the emotional flavour and interpersonal situations that produced the notes (Bogdan and Taylor 1975). The emphasis in this stage of analysis is on thinking about what is being said, the meaning and the intent of each response – what Strauss (1987) refers to as open coding. Open coding is a constant comparative approach to the data, while axial coding defines common themes in the data, and selective coding reveals the relationships between the categories (Glaser and Strauss 1967). All three types of coding were employed in the analysis of the data. One of the dangers of the open-coding stage that social scientists are warned to avoid is the imposition of outside (etic) categories into the coding. Instead the responses should 'speak' for themselves from an insider's (emic) perspective. Interviewers should constantly ask themselves questions of this nature: 'to what extent is this a

participant's world view or some composite of my representation of his/her world view? (Agar 1980: 181). As someone new to the field of ethnography, I constantly reminded myself of these dangers and often consulted with social anthropologists to verify my coding techniques and subsequent analyses.

Once all of the stakeholder responses had been open coded I sought broad themes, patterns and categories – a process known as axial coding. During this process three recurring themes in stakeholder responses became evident: (1) most agreed that there was some sort of relationship between the looting of archaeological artefacts and the demand for material; (2) all respondents had questions surrounding the efficacy of the legal market (positive, negative and undecided positions); and (3) almost all interviewees had an opinion on the recent proposed IAA initiative to sell sherds in addition to acting as the regulators of the trade (for further discussion see Kersel and Kletter 2006). While the first two themes were part of my original research design, responses about the IAA proposal to sell sherds added an interesting element to my analysis.

Each of the stakeholders approached as part of this research expressed an interest in the outcomes, for a variety of reasons. All (even the dealing and collecting communities) agreed that the destruction of archaeological sites as a result of looting was a devastating loss to our collective knowledge, but the root cause of looting was (and still is) a hotly debated point (see Kersel 2007 for further discussion), as is the relationship between demand and looting. The following section outlines the stakeholder responses to the question of the efficacy of the legal market for antiquities as a deterrent to archaeological site destruction.

Results

When asked about the relationship between the demand for artefacts and the looting of archaeological sites and thefts from museums and private collections, over 70 per cent (N=66) of the total respondents (N=94) declared that there was a causal relationship: the demand for archaeological artefacts in the legal marketplace results in the looting of archaeological sites (see Table 10.2). The table illustrates the stakeholder positions on the question of whether there is a link between demand and looting. Four of the six stakeholder (archaeologists, government employees, miscellaneous and dealers) responses supported the position that a legal market does not act as a deterrent to looting, and some asserted that the market may actually stimulate looting. The museum professional group is evenly divided over the issue. The only set of stakeholders who supported the hypothesis that a legal trade will diminish looting was the collecting community, which is an interesting comment on their ability to avoid discussions involving the origins of the artefacts they are considering for purchase.

All but one of the archaeologists interviewed (N=21) experienced some form of looting at a site with which they were associated, with all holding that

Table 10.2 Stakeholder group positions on the link between demand and looting

Stakeholder group	Yes %	No %	Total %
Archaeologists	95	5	100
Collectors	33	67	100
Dealers	54	46	100
Government employees	100	0	100
Miscellaneous	60	40	100
Museum professionals	50	50	100

the demand for archaeological material is one of the reasons why looting occurs. This group felt that demand for archaeological material in the open market has a direct impact on the looting of archaeological sites and some of those interviewed for this research provided examples which they felt illustrated this causal relationship:

We left some pots *in situ* because it was the end of our work day and even though we covered them up and made sure there was no trace of them, the next morning they were gone. Some time later these same pots (or ones very similar, I'm not sure) were in the shop window of a very reputable dealer.

(Archaeologist 8)

All of the governmental employees (100 per cent; N=17) (regardless of the government: Israeli, Jordanian or Palestinian) agreed that there was a link between demand and looting. Many of them could document specific instances where material looted from a particular archaeological site then appeared in a shop inventory. Both archaeologists and government employees had, on occasion, come into contact with middlemen or even looters who confirmed that much of their illegal excavation of sites was demand-driven: 'Israeli dealers tell Palestinians where and what to dig.' Both of these stakeholder groups (archaeologists and government employees) also admitted that there might be other possible reasons why looters illegally excavate sites, but that consumer demand was the greatest driving force (see Kersel 2007). The closure of the borders between Israel and the PA as the result of the 2001 Al-Aqsa Intifada,¹⁴ and the construction of the barrier wall along the border were often cited as reasons why looting occurs.

Of the other stakeholder categories, opinions were divided on the relationship between demand and the looting of archaeological sites. 'There must be a constant supply to meet demand, therefore a licensed dealer scheme would serve to encourage looting rather than working towards its elimination,' stated one respondent (Dealer 5). Some asserted that the current inventory (pre-1978

material) in the shops and material available through de-accessioning, chance finds and the selling off of collections were enough to satisfy consumer demand:

There is enough material out there to satisfy everyone – tourist and high-end collector alike, there is no need for people to loot archaeological sites. People loot because it's an interesting way to spend an afternoon, not because someone in New York City wants an oil lamp with a menorah on it.
(Dealer 16)

Although 46 per cent (N=16) of the dealers interviewed felt that there was no relationship between looting and the sale of archaeological material, 54 per cent fully admitted to a connection between the two spheres of the economy:

If a tourist comes into my store and wants a figurine from the Iron II period and I don't have one I ask some of my fellow shop owners. If they don't have one I call my 'middleman' in Hebron to ask if he has any in his storeroom. Within days I have one in my shop. I don't ask too many questions, but I do ask for the location of the find because lots of tourists want to know the name of the archaeological site that the figurine came from.
(Interview, Dealer 19)

I get the catalogues from the major auction houses and I check eBay and I monitor what is selling. Right now inscriptions are hot, anything with an inscription is a good seller, but I don't have many pieces. I am always on the lookout for inscriptions. I make sure that my contacts in the territories know that I can easily move inscriptions.
(Interview, Dealer 27)

In these and other interviews, dealers relate various scenarios that confirm a tie between the demand for a particular object and its appearance in their inventory. These responses raise the question, in a truly legal (without illegal elements) market lacking an Iron II figurine, but with a consumer demanding such an item, would looting still occur to meet the demand?

Examples like this and testimony from archaeologists, dealers and government employees clearly illustrate the link between consumer demand for archaeological material and the looting of archaeological sites. The qualitative data presented as a result of this research indicate that the legal market for antiquities in Israel does not diminish looting, and may in fact contribute to greater mining of archaeological sites for saleable items. Interviewee responses indicate that the legal market is flawed, not entirely legal, and may contribute to looting, but still some sentiment remains that a trade in antiquities should be permitted.

Conclusion

Long enshrined as a method, a theoretical orientation and even a philosophical paradigm within anthropology, ethnography has recently been extended to cultural studies, literary theory, folklore, women's studies, sociology and cultural geography (Tedlock 2000: 455–6). The field of Heritage Studies may now be added to this list because heritage professionals use ethnography, interviewing and qualitative research analyses on a daily basis to inform their work. This type of research is predicated on the participation and contribution of the public. No matter how much care the heritage professional devotes to the project, its success depends on more than just individual effort. Outside social forces, including local, national and sometimes international relationships, make the research possible.

There are myriad social forces affecting the work undertaken in examining the research questions surrounding the efficacy of a legal trade in antiquities. I was confronted with ethical problems almost daily, and had to make decisions – rightly or wrongly – on how to proceed in the face of dilemmas. The underlying element of illegality in some subjects' actions determined much of how the methodology was structured, how questions were asked, and how interviews were initiated and carried out. Through trial and error, discussions with social anthropologists, heritage practitioners and professional policy evaluators, I constructed and used an acceptable, verifiable methodology to investigate the many facets of the legal trade in antiquities. It is my hope that this study produced reliable results, with supportable data that can be used in future cultural property protection policy formation in Israel and Palestine, and that my endeavours will be accepted as a meaningful contribution to the heritage field.

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Notes

- 1 Specifically Brendan Burchell, social anthropologist, Magdalen College, Cambridge; Efrat Ben Ze'ev, Professor, The Truman Institute at the Hebrew University, Ruppin Academic Center; Paola Filippucci, social anthropologist, University of Cambridge; and social policy analyst Patricia Neu, USAID. More generally, attending the Legal Anthropology module taught by various faculty members in the Department of Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge proved an extremely beneficial experience.
- 2 Wolcott's (1988: 194) definition of active interview activity is 'anything that the fieldworker does that intrudes upon the natural setting and is done with the conscious intent of obtaining specific information directly from one's subjects'.
- 3 Literally someone who guards an entrance, and in this instance it is entrance (access) to the subjects of the ethnographic enquiry.
- 4 Professor Efrat Ben Ze'ev, The Truman Institute at the Hebrew University, Ruppin Academic Center.
- 5 Patricia Neu, USAID contractor.
- 6 One of the fundamental tenets in the Code of Ethics of the National Association for the Practice of Anthropology (NAPA) is that 'Anthropologists will contribute to the growth of their discipline through communicating and publishing scientific and practical information about the work in which they are engaged, including, as appropriate, theory, processes, outcomes and professional techniques and methods'. The NAPA Ethical Guidelines are available at http://www.practicinganthropology.org/about/section=ethical_guidelines.
- 7 Between my Hebrew and the typical mastery of English by Israeli participants there was no need to have the interview guide translated into Hebrew.
- 8 Kenneth Polk is Professor of Criminology at the University of Melbourne. He has written extensively on criminal aspects of the art and antiques market.
- 9 This notion of informed consent is the basic principle of scientific research involving human populations. This research followed the informed consent guidelines as stated in the American Anthropological Association (AAA) Code of Ethics, available at <http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ethcode.htm>.
- 10 A subsection of the AAA. See n.6 above for the website with the NAPA Ethical Guidelines for Practitioners.
- 11 The research assistants posed as tourists potentially interested in purchasing antiques. They asked in-depth questions regarding provenance, export licences, findspots, illegality or legality of their purchase. I used a total of six research assistants. None of their findings were used in my data analysis.
- 12 This event occurred while gathering data for a paper I was preparing on archaeological replicas for sale in the tourist shops (see Kersel and Luke 2005).
- 13 If I had provided the name of the unlicensed dealer it is probable that word of this incident would have spread in the dealing community and no one would then have agreed to meet me. As a result, my research (and the discipline) would have suffered.
- 14 In 2001, antiques authorities on both sides of the border reported a rise of 300 per cent in incidents of tomb robbing (Ephron 2001).

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11

METHODS FOR INVESTIGATING LOCALS' PERCEPTIONS OF A CULTURAL HERITAGE PRODUCT FOR TOURISM

Lessons from Botswana

Susan Keitumetse

Background and introduction

While research investigating the public meaning of archaeological/cultural heritage has increased in intensity and scope over the past decades both in the USA (Little 2005; McManamon 2005; LaRoche 2005) and the UK (Merriman 2004), limited progress has been made in the African region (Keitumetse 2005). In particular, specific methods for investigating the changing attitudes that communities (or hosts, as they are referred to in tourism studies) have towards cultural heritage as it becomes a tourism product, that is, a product used in tourism transactions, are scarce. This means there is a significant lack of well-informed management strategies to guide the implementation of cultural heritage tourism projects in developing countries such as Botswana. Geographical variations, definitions and categories of cultural tourism products exist at both the local and the international level. Terms such as *cultural heritage*, *archaeological heritage* and *heritage tourism* are becoming global and increasingly popular due to the emerging demand for new tourism products. Consequently research that provides an understanding of the hosts' own definitions of these terms is needed. This chapter discusses how a preliminary approach based on case-study methods, combined with ethnographic research and visualisation, can be used to develop and supplement existing approaches to research on community-based heritage tourism.

Studies of material culture, as emblematic of 'traditional cultures', are gradually becoming more and more common as tourism products diversify from