Looting of antiquities in Jordan: A General Overview

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Abstract: *The aim of this research is to investigate the issue of looting, which unfortunately remains prevalent in Jordan. The research discusses the marketing of antiquities and looting in Jordan through personal interviews with a number of individuals who are engaged in this activity. There is also an analysis of the role of the internet, religion, and tradition in Jordan in connection with the spread of illegal excavations; symbols and signs that purport to direct to treasure are discussed in detail. This research includes an in-depth analysis of 75 other interviews carried out with individuals involved in the marketing of antiquities and illegal excavation who reside in As-Salt, 'Ajloun, and Amman. As a result of their background, they give a good sense of the motives behind the practice of looting and the factors that directly contribute to the activity, most of which being financial.*

Keywords: *Jordan, Looting, Media, illegal digging.*

Introduction

The history of Jordan is replete with stories of looting, dating even from the end of the nineteenth century before Jordan was a state. Lapp, who excavated Bāb al-Dhrāʿ in the Wadi ʿAraba, recorded what is often cited as the first, and most extreme, case of looting in modern Jordanian history.

This story covers a fifteen-year period from the start of his discovery of the mass of tombs and preponderance of artifacts in this area, and the complete dissemination of such artifacts throughout the wider region (Amman and Jerusalem) only a decade and a half later.

This period saw thousands of recognisable artifacts looted and sold in markets, with even experts involved in the rescue operation caught up in the practice of looting, and marks an important case study of looting in Jordan (Lapp 1966: 104 -111).

However, there are stories much older still, a century and a half ago Klein discovered the Mēshaʿ stele (Fatn and Reddish 2008: 98), but his interest in the stone led the local people to destroy it. We therefore find that the looting enterprise is motivated not only from a position of subsistence economy but is in fact tied up with folklore. The global trade in antiquities is a huge international enterprise and one which prompts complex questions of legality and illegality.

In fact, the antiquities market is often held up alongside drug trafficking and the smuggling of arms as an example of similar illicit trade (see Alder and Polk 2002; Bernick 1998; Borodkin 1995; Polk 1999). There are obvious parallels between the movement of drugs and antiquities from source to consumer, across many international borders and through a number of different agents, but there is one noticeable difference, and that is the question of legality. While trafficked drugs are always illegal, antiquities, undergo a complicated journey which in fact causes them to change from illegal to legal, so that by the time they reach their destination they are no longer "black market" items (this is referred to as

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"laundering"). There is therefore a clear breaking down of boundaries between, say, criminal and not, in the antiquities trade, and one which demands investigation. The diagram by Kersel (2015: Figure 9.1.), (Fig. 1) shows this laundering process in a flow chart and how this takes place in a number of countries (Kersel 2015). Looting represents a substantial threat to archaeological practice and heritage, and so to our understanding of the past; we may define it as the for-profit plundering of archaeological sites for reasons beyond and against scientific research. However, it is extremely difficult to accurately quantify the severity of looting, with this difficulty leading to further problems for archaeologists. Bowman suggests that there are two main reasons behind the small quantity of research carried out into the nature of looting (Bowman 2008). Firstly, looting is a clandestine activity; researchers rarely come into contact with looters and if they do make contact looters are reluctant to share their "stories". Secondly, looting involves both recorded and unrecorded sites (i.e. sites yet to be discovered), making assessment of damage to the archaeological record very difficult.

As argued by Contreras and Brodie (2010), it remains difficult to quantify the global degree of archaeological site looting chiefly due to the shortage of documented information regarding this matter. However, Proulx (2013) reported, based on a global survey of 1835 field archaeologists from 118 countries, that 97.9% of the participants and 87% of the included countries have experienced some forms of looting. Additionally, Gutchen (1983) cited a survey claiming that more than 50% of the Mayan sites in Belize were looted. Besides, Bedaux and Rowlands (2001) reported that about 45% and 17% of 830 archaeological sites in Mali were damaged and severely damaged by looters, respectively. Moreover, Brodie (2003) estimated that the global trade in antiquities

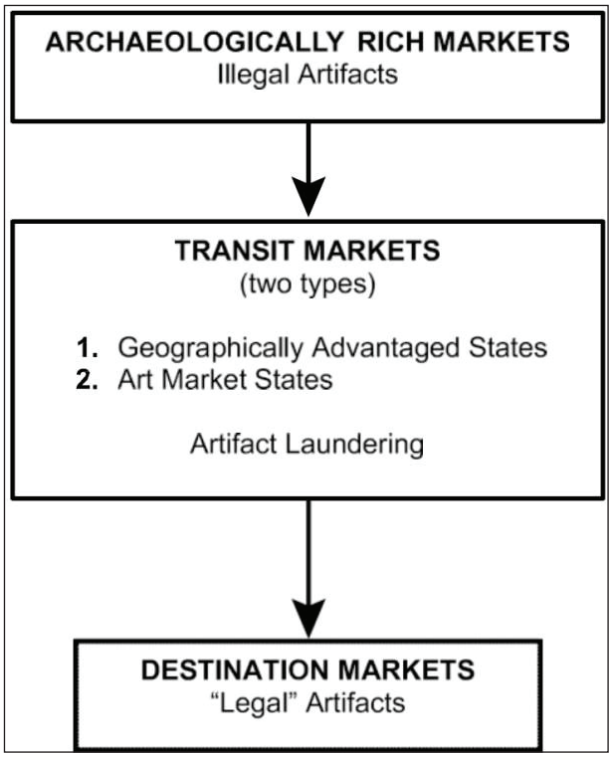

Fig. 1: Market flow of the Illegal Trade in Antiquities (after Kersel 2015: Figure 9.1.)

reaches the level of four billion USD per year. The substantial size of this global issue is believed to severely impact on the information possibly retrieved from archaeological study.

Looting is recognized as a serious problem in the Levant, the Middle East and West Asia. For instance, Roosevelt and Luke (2006) reported that 90% of the four hundred sites surveyed in western Turkey have experienced illicit excavation. Furthermore, Stone (2008a, 2008b) demonstrated that the looted archaeological sites in Southern Iraq, in the period following the illegal US/UK-led invasion in 2013, cover a much larger area than ever investigated.

The field of archaeology goes to great lengths to scientifically excavate and thereby protect artifacts, but this is not true of looting, which is usually unscientific in its methods and cannot guarantee the safety of the artifacts, and much less the site itself. In fact, many archaeological methods such as stratigraphic excavation,

which are always painstakingly adhered to in scientific excavations, are completely disrupted by damaged (looted) sites. Relying on very precise examination of strata in the earth and close measurement of the layout of a site (the exact location of artifacts may be useful for dating, and is therefore recorded meticulously). Archaeology is therefore marked by a very detailed and scientific approach which is entirely incompatible with looting. There is the further complication that archaeologists and looters are many times simply searching for different things.

For the archaeologist, a seemingly unimportant item may be extremely significant either for its own sake or because its position sheds light on the history of the site as a whole. The looter, on the other hand, is only interested in either monetary or aesthetic value. It is possible to say that the source countries of illegally excavated artifacts are generally less economically developed (LEDCs[1]) whereas the demand to buy them comes from more economically developed countries (MEDCs). Between these, there are areas called "portals" through which the artifacts must pass; these are jurisdictions that allow free trade and therefore enable the objects to pass from illegal to legal in nature. The motivations at either end are clear: economic necessity in the LEDCs and often collector driven reasons in the MEDCs such as the desire to personally own and display the items[2].

The economic drive in the LEDCs are of course caused by poverty although this can be severely worsened in times of crisis such as during civil wars; for example, the artifacts and ancient monuments of countries such as Afghanistan, Cambodia and Somalia have all seen particularly bad destruction in times of war.

Legal challenges to looting

In 1970, the UNESCO General Conference met in Paris from the 12th October to 14th November 1970 to discuss the legal challenges to looting[3]. During the meeting, the Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property (hereafter, CMP) was ratified (Brodie et al 2006: 4). CMP has subsequently been instrumental in the repatriation of important archaeological pieces from illegal traders and collectors to the legal owners of their cultural heritage. In 2002 and in 2003, several powerful countries ratified CMP, including Denmark, Japan, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom (Brodie et al 2006: 8-9). Switzerland then enacted further national legislation in June 2005, following the UK parliament's passing of the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offenses) Act (2003) (ibid). That most recent wave of ratifications of the CMP, and individual nations further legislating as based on this convention, certainly assists a great deal in the fight against the dealing of illegally excavated cultural artifacts. However, despite these strides that have been made in legislation over the past decade and a half, it goes without saying that significant efforts are still required in policing the antiquity trade to eradicate the illegal excavation of and trade in antiquities.

The US, too, has enacted prosecutions against dealers of stolen antiquities. A successful example of how the law can assist in the identification and punishment of illegal dealers is the United States vs. McClain case, as reported by Brodie et al (2006: 2-3). McClain was convicted of conspiring to violate the National Stolen Property Act (NSPA) through his trading in archaeological artifacts stolen from Mexico; the prosecution's case relied on their proving that the artifacts were considered as stolen at their point of removal. As Brodie et al summarise the case:

In 1972 Mexico had enacted legislation vesting ownership of all undiscovered

archaeological objects in the Mexican nation. The removal of the described objects without permission was therefore theft, and if such objects were brought to the United States they would be identified as stolen. The United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit analyzed the Mexican vesting law to determine whether it was truly an ownership law or whether it was merely regulatory in nature. The court concluded that the 1972 law was a vesting statute that utilized terms that were sufficiently clear for the U.S citizen to understand (3).

Despite the aggressive response of the collecting community against the McClain decision (or, as it became known, the McClain Doctrine), it has nonetheless been employed subsequently in a variety of civil claims for the repossession of stolen archaeological artifacts. The legal validity of the McClain Doctrine has indeed been disputed in a US court, though the doctrinal underpinning was proved valid (ibid: 3). As is mentioned above, it was with the creation of the Ottoman Antiques Law in 1874 that the geo-political area now named Jordan came under the ambit of a law explicitly dealing with archaeological artifacts; it was in September of 1925 that the first such law was passed in Transjordan (then a British "Protectorate"). In the post-independence period, there have been several legal and governmental efforts to protect antiquities, and several revisions of the Law of Antiquities, the most recent having occurred in 2004[4], with various clauses describing the legalities of ownership of immovable artifacts, the trade of antiques, and possible punishments and fines. In Jordan, as elsewhere, successful legal intervention against the illicit trade of antiquities can be effective in the struggle against the trade of illegal artifacts. However, opposition to those same laws and policies, and influence on the processes by which laws and policies are arrived at, is possible; the law remains a battleground rather than defence against looting and related practices.

Looting in Jordan

Jordan fits into this scheme on account of its rich archaeological tradition and the high levels of looting which occur there. The country contains many valuable sites including the well-known ancient Nabataean city of Petra, which UNESCO has described as "one of the most precious cultural properties of man's [sic] cultural heritage". There are, however, mixed feelings in Jordan regarding the cultural heritage: while the government certainly views it as an important economic asset (for international tourism), and similarly many individuals see the heritage as a means to raise money for themselves. The same heritage is often seen as a hindrance to urbanisation and development.

The looting of archaeological sites is a substantial problem in contemporary Jordan for professional archaeologists' and others' understanding of local and national histories through archaeological evidence. Whilst it is almost impossible to assess the extent of looting either in contemporary Jordan or historically, not least since it is clandestine (Contreras and Brodie 2010: 100-101), the culture of (and economic need for) stealing and otherwise illegally acquiring antiquities appears to be rampant, as it is in Israel, Syria, and Iraq (Kersel and Chesson 2013: 680-683), (Fig. 2).

Looting in Jordan in a historical perspective

The looting of antiquities against the laws in place prohibiting such practice has taken place in Jordan over three historical periods: The Ottoman period, the British Mandate period, and the post-independence period. The Ottoman antiques laws of 1874 and 1884 were created to prevent the transfer of archaeological artifacts within and out of the Ottoman Empire's territory (Kersel 2010:85-87). However, Kersel (ibid) argues that the enforcement of such laws was not practical due to the inability of the

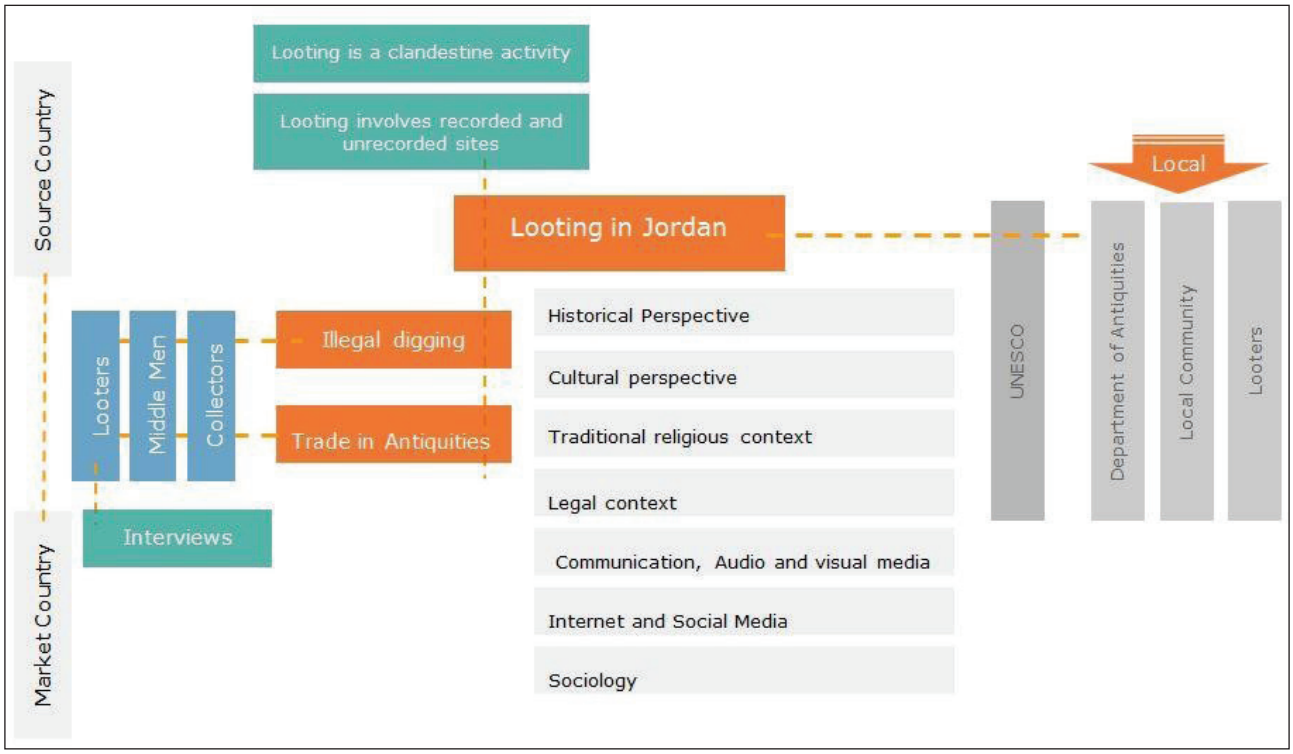

Fig. 2: Looting in Jordan

authorities of the Ottoman Empire to patrol its entire sphere of influence. Furthermore, during the twentieth century, the illegal looting of archaeological artifacts increased as a result of a number of factors including the development of a global market for antiquities, political uncertainty, inadequate law enforcement, and utter poverty and scarcity of significant profitable activities for the local residents (Al-Houdalieh 2012: 99).

Looting, illegal digging and trade in antiquities in Jordan

There are different ways in which the recently discovered artifacts can be delivered to what will be their final destination (which is usually outside the source country). If the source country is also a market country, such as the USA or Israel, the item may remain in the country for longer (Kersel 2015: 16).

Prott and O'Keefe believe that there are two main markets in this operation. The first is what they call the "geographically advantaged state" (1989: 532); this is the state through which, thanks to its position close to a source country for archaeological items, the items themselves will inevitably pass, even for a short time. Israel is a prime example of this type of state, because the neighbouring states, and in particular the Palestinian Territories, are archaeologically rich.

The second kind of country is the "art market states" (ibid.); these are the countries where the different services associated with the art world, such as museums, auctions and collections, are located. There are a number of stages in the life of a looted artifacts: one of the primary transformations is the development from being "illegal" to becoming "legal". This process always involves passing through different countries, through which a certificate can be received that allows the piece to travel legally into a market state, or an "art market state" in the above paradigm. It is a feature of

the "transit states", which in many cases are the "geographically advantaged" ones as well, that a "no questions asked" policy is in play, whereby the provenance of items coming into the country is not seen as a matter for concern. On exiting such a state, the item has become fully legitimized and can be sold even at the highest levels of the art world. The collectors themselves maintain this status quo, often reflecting in their buying practices the same lack of concern that these transit markets show in their failure to show concern for the provenance of items for sale. It should be noted at this point that the passing of the artifacts from country to country is the usual but by no means the necessary system: there are cases (such as the USA, where Native American items are both sourced and purchased; see also Jerusalem) which are both archaeologically rich and art market nations, and in such cases the goods stay in this country for the whole duration of this process (see Kersel 2006).

The diagram *Stakeholders in the Middle Eastern trade in illegal antiquities pyramid* (Fig. 3) sets out Kersel's threefold schema of the process of selling artifacts of illegal provenance, which she breaks down into "production, distribution, and consumption." As has been discussed above, the first stage is that in which the object is discovered and looted; this stage always takes place in a source country, out of necessity. The second and third stages can take place anywhere on the international stage, and reflect the process of the middleman (or occasionally, -woman), in which the transfer from illegal to legal status is attained, and finally the selling of the artefact, or what Kersel calls the "eventual consumption" of the looted item. Interestingly, she comments on the role of the middleman, suggesting that even this character feels that what they are doing is not unethical, since they view themselves as helping an economy at the first level and also

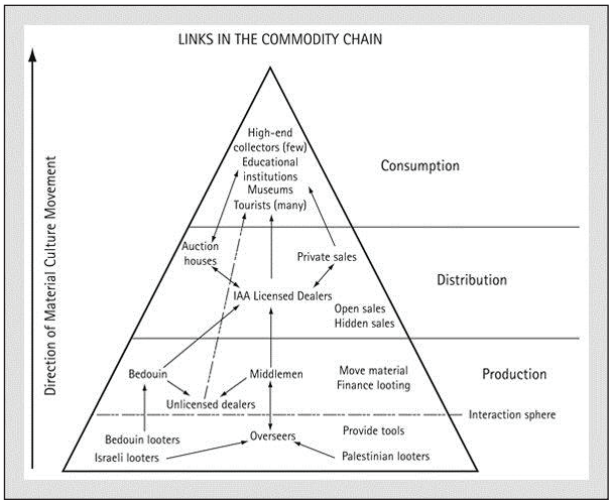

Fig. 3: Stakeholders in the Middle Eastern Trade in Illegal Antiquities Pyramid (after Kersel 2012: 256).

as responding to the demands of consumers at the third level.

Some scholars have attempted to consider the motivational factors for the agents involved at all of these levels. Concerning the private collectors and consumers at the third level of the operation, it has been suggested that ultimately the drive to collect is associated with a psychological desire for control. Hence Kersel writes, "this view is predicated on the owner–object relationship as a domination-based link whereby the owner of the object (with a symbolic value) is imbued with power over the past through ownership." Naturally this is not the only option; looted archaeological artifacts represent a strong economic asset which many collectors are understood to be using for their own economic aims, sometimes as means for social climbing or maintaining social status.

The relationship between archaeology and the public, which is a question about public education and perception, is also an important factor in this case. Regarding the looters at the first level of the operation, the assumption that the motivation is economic and driven by economic need or necessity remains generally accepted. This is excepting certain examples

in which other factors have been proven to be extant, usually restricted to specific cases, such as Abu el-Haj's (2001) and Kersel's (2007) case studies of the Palestinians who loot out of an ideological desire to eradicate Jewish or Israeli heritage from the landscape. Dietzler (2013) suggested the usage of a trade progression model that consists of four stages so as to understand the relations between the criminal networks involved the global trade of looted antiquities. The four stages are as follows: theft (stage 1); transit (stage 2); facilitation (stage 3); and sale/purchase (stage 4). The key players in these stages are as follows: looters (stage 1); smugglers (stage 2); document forgers, government officials, curators, academics, launderers, appraisers, and valuers (stage 3); and dealers, buyers, and collectors (stage 4), (Dietzler 2013: 337). In addition, Dietzler (2013) provided a diagram demonstrating the macro- and micro-settings in which the actors within these criminal networks relate and function (Fig. 4).

In recent times, unauthorised exploration and excavations have become commonplace in Jordanian society. This has been especially the case since the first and second Gulf War and the Arab Spring, whereby the increase in trade of unauthorised Iraqi and Syrian antiquities passing through Jordan encouraged further looting within Jordan itself. During this period, trade passed through Jordan instead of directly

SEQUENCE →→→	Stage 1 Theft	Stage 2 Transit	Stage 3 Facilitation	Stage 4 Sale/Purchase
ROLE Motivated Offender	Looters	Smugglers	Document Forgers Government Officials Curators Academics Launderers Appraisers Valuers	Dealers Buyers Collectors
MICRO-SETTING Suitable Target & Absence of Capable Guardianship	Archaeological Site	Border Checkpoint Maritime Port Airport Customs	University Museum Embassy Border Checkpoint Maritime port Airport customs Internet	Private residence Museum Hotel Internet
MACRO-SETTING Absence of Capable Guardianship	Source Country	Transit Country	Source Country Transit Country Market Country Internet	Market Country Internet

Fig. 4: Four-Stage Trade Progression Model (Dietzler, 2013: 338).

to Israel and Jordan's location became ever more important for the illicit trade of regional antiquities. Jordan can therefore be considered as a channel that carries archaeological pieces into Israel to enter the rest of the world.

Practice in Jordan corresponds to two of Kersel's stages:

1.1. Distribution: in which Jordan is a mediator for transferring archaeological pieces, from Syria and Iraq and then to outside the country.

1.2. Production: where local artifacts come from illegal excavations in Jordan.

The distribution stage is operated by professional people with high financial, political and organisational abilities, and is often connected to institutions that will enable them to transfer a large quantity of artifacts from one place to another by bribery and smuggling. They tend to have knowledge about the artifacts themselves, regarding the financial, archaeological and cultural value that they have. These actors are the middlemen who usually retain the greatest cut of the profits. The production stage is carried out by individuals who have great understanding or familiarity with the commercial and cultural worth of the antiquities as well as knowledge of the looting approaches. The cut normally gained by these actors is estimated to be about 1% of the market value of the artefact (Borodkin 1995: 377; Kersel 2005: 81).

We interviewed some Iraqi academics in archaeology who all reported that during the Second Gulf War, there were some US military personnel who were seeking to obtain ancient antiquities specifically found in Iraq pertaining to Jewish culture with a view to removing these from Iraq. In fact, many artifacts that were stolen were original pieces, and not counterfeit pieces (of which there are many); this indicates that the people who stole these artifacts were

well informed about how to identify genuine ones among fakes and where they were to be found. This supports the hypothesis that most of the illicit items stolen from museums in Iraq were obtained with the support of those who are well-informed about artifacts' locations and attributes, suggesting the involvement of museum curators in Iraq.[5]

Jordanian public security statistics indicate an increase in theft-related crimes and the effects of stealing or trafficking. The public security records show crime happening across various strata of Jordanian society but does not specify what these crimes are or note their severity: it could be anything from a severe attack on an archaeological site to a lesser crime of failure to obtain a permit to build a house in a protected archaeological area, as well as ranging from the theft of antiquities to smuggling them. Some people who have been interviewed indicated that they, or their children, may have been involved in illicit excavations; the category of public security records indicates that students and children confirmed the spread of this phenomenon and that they do not have knowledge of the importance of community history and cultural heritage of Jordan. Students under 18 years of age are not liable under Jordanian law for any crimes committed and cannot be sanctioned or face imprisonment.

In my interviews we were informed by multiple sources that their children had been involved in drilling and excavations; this is corroborated by the public security records which say that some students and children have taken part in looting. The sources also elaborated that they did not place great value on looted antiquities and, generally, their cultural heritage. Furthermore, there is currently a gap in Jordanian law whereby the criminal age of responsibility is 18 and so adult looters exploit children to conduct criminal activities for them. Hence, the adults using these minors are able to take advantage of the legal situation to avoid prosecution of themselves and the children.

Cultures and the Practice of Looting in Jordan "Ottoman Gold", "ʿĪsmali"

We can say from my own interviews with many Jordanians that there is a widespread tendency to associate archaeology with personal monetary gain. Such associations are often expressed through socially shared discourses of "Ottoman gold" – or, "ʿiṣmalī gold", which is the Jordanian term for the Ottoman currency, the dinar – that can, as the stories go, bring great wealth. This much-told story tells that officials of the Ottoman Empire buried gold at various locations across Jordan, and that maps still exist – and are available in Turkey – that show the exact location of these riches. Such stories about the high value of the country's archaeological material have led to major illegal excavations being conducted in the vicinities of az-Zarqāʾa, al-Mafraq and Maʿān, each near the Ḥejāz railway that links the north and south of Jordan, the area believed to be where the Ottomans buried their gold. However, there have been several cases of people conducting brief excavation work in a particular locale so as to attract wider popular attention and cultivate the belief that they are in possession of an "Ottoman map" (Arabic *Kharīṭah Turkīyah*), before selling an entirely bogus map – often on deer or sheep skins – to prospective looters (Fig. 5).

Looting within the historical context

In Jordan there is a strong correlation between tradition and religion. The majority of the local population does not differentiate between whether the primary source of an act or a behaviour is a religious custom or a tradition, but many people do try to justify their behaviour through religious references. Illegal excavations and trade in antiquities have traditionally been an important tradition that

Fig. 5: An Example of an "Ottoman Map", Allegedly Depicting a Site of Buried Treasure and Sold to Potential Looters.

mixes religion with social behaviour. What could be the connection between religion and looting? It may not be obvious, since looting is a social behaviour carried out in order to get rich and obtain money in a quick and easy manner. Furthermore, the absence of any conception or knowledge of the cultural value of the artifacts contributes to the increase in acts of illegal excavation of antiquities of Jordan. Religious beliefs have, however, played an important role in increasing the search for ancient things. The difference between religious beliefs and traditions can be illustrated by their slightly different outcomes in the arena of looting: religious beliefs have played an important role in increasing the search for ancient relics, while religious traditions have contributed techniques for finding gold.

Arabic historical sources and popular stories in Arabic literature contain many references to the search for gold and buried treasure[6]. On the subject of why so many stories and novels about treasure hunting arose, Ibn Khaldūn writes in chapter IV of the book *al-Muqaddimah* ("The Introduction") about finds from graves and buried treasures, and about the digging up of graves. He mentions that the Egyptian state imposed a tax of 20 per cent on looking for gold and treasures. This acted as an incentive for gold-hunters and prompted a huge increase in gold-hunting activity in tombs and among ancient relics as it was believed that, for the government to make such an announcement and to expect to accrue tax, there must be a vast amount of buried gold waiting to be found. Some people have historically taken ancient artifacts as a kind of protection against the evil eye or as protection from evil spirits; this is especially the case in rural Jordanian areas. This purely cultural tradition is inherited generation after generation, so much so that some people wear and place around their homes metal objects dating back to the Ottoman age in Jordan as a kind of protection. The Arab heritage refers to this type of old item as a sort of amulet and there is a vast tradition of how amulets were and continue to be used extensively in magic and in communication with jinn. This practice, the usage of some historical archaeological objects as means of protection from the evil eye, is a

wide spread habit in the rural areas of Jordan.

Jinn, Sheikhs, and "Jewish Gold"

One of the most important traditional elements in the search for gold by treasure hunters is the jinn. Specifically, there are three different figures which should be discussed, and they are the *ghoul*, the *jinn* (pl. of *jinni*) and the *Raṣad*. Although historic, these labels function practically depending on usage and there is much overlap. The *jinn* – spirits, both malevolent and beneficent – are more mainstream because they appear in the Qur'an and therefore are widely believed in; for example, the story of Suleiman, the son of David and the Prophet, to whom God gave control over the jinn. Suleiman used the jinn to bring him treasures from all over the world. The *ghoul* on the other hand is a mythical character, mentioned only in folk tales and folk stories, which is characterised by brutality and which often scares people. The *Raṣad* is most relevant to our theme, as it is associated specifically with relics and gold; in some cases, it can be any goblin that guards gold. In order to get rid of the *Raṣad*, one should perform a ritual that is outlawed in official religious practices, such as the burning of the Holy Quran or asking Satan or jinn for help finding gold. These Islamic figures are often used by looters to understand their practice, as has been most fully described by Al-Houdalieh (2012, though see also the same author's 2013 essay). It appears that many looters, both in the Palestinian National Territories (OPT) and in Jordan, believe that the jinn (or raṣads) guard potentially lucrative archaeological sites and artifacts (Al-Houdalieh 2012: 101). Certain Islamic religious figures (sheikhs) are crucial within the discourses of jinn as they relate to looting, since people often seek their help in their search for treasure because the sheikhs are believed to be able to read various religious texts in such a way as to dispel the jinn that guard the "buried treasure" (Christian and Samaritan figures are also sought). In terms of practice, sheikhs may, for example, remove small amounts of soil from the excavation and thereafter divine the presence and purpose of a jinni. Other practices include the purchase and highly symbolically-charged use of expensive spices, from Morocco and from India typically, and costing up to two thousand Jordanian dinars per gram, to aid in locating and procuring artifacts. There have also been reports of various people from the excavations' surround, typically but not exclusively children, being used by sheikhs and others to encourage a successful expedition. This is done by bringing the group of people to a place where gold is believed to be located, reading a spell and attempting to communicate with the jinn through the group. There is a widespread belief that such efforts will increase the likelihood of locating and thereafter profiting from archaeological artifacts.

There have however been reports of looters suffering adverse physical effects due to their perceived relations with jinn, with several looters reporting physical and psychological issues subsequent to jinn-related activities (see Al-Houdalieh 2013: 324, for the relative rates of such injuries as to other causes of injury). Moreover, groups of looters are expected to pay often relatively very large sums of money of sheikhs for their services with the looting and jinn. Thirdly, regarding the culture of looting, there appears to be a tendency amongst would-be looters and amongst the general population to believe that "Jewish gold" and Jewish artifacts – and, even, simply artifacts that refer to Jews or Jewishness – are particularly valuable. Of course, whatever the principle target of the looters is ("Ottoman gold", or "Jewish silver", for example), much of archaeological value will be destroyed in the process of excavation. As to the regions within Jordan that are most often looted, it appears that the cities and surroundings of ʿAjloun, Irbid and Salt are

those most often targeted by looters on account of their long-held relationship with the Romans and subsequently the Byzantines accounting for the large number of tombs and coin hoards. The Dead Sea and generally the south of Jordan is also popular, although in this case artifacts date to the Stone Age and the Iron Age, with there being almost no surviving tombs on account of the highly-salinated soil. There was also a recent case in Al-Ghōr aṣ-Ṣāfī (Politis 2002: 281-96) in which excavated tombstones were found bearing Jewish symbols that were certainly some of it not original. It seemed that some agent had attempted to increase the value of the artifacts [?] through tampering with them, which in fact destroyed them.

The way in which sheikhs divine the presence of treasure using the jinn varies in practice but a typical scenario might be described. It should be noted as well that the practice is essentially illegal and often there are various elements of manipulation at play. Typically, the interested party will come to the site suspected of having a trove, and the diviner will begin to recite a magical mumbling sound which prepares the jinn. One practice involves the diviner then leaving and removing a soil sample from the site which he will place under his head whilst sleeping; this results in the answer coming to him in a dream. Alternatively, the process may take place there and then with the diviner summoning the jinn to reveal himself and hypnotise a member of the party who will reveal the location of the treasure either through strange movements or through declaring the visions he is receiving. People who engage in this generally do so fearfully, since they do not trust the jinn and are aware that they may manipulate them or lure them into a trap.

There is also widespread fear of "satanic dreams", in which the devil appears to seekers in dreams to announce the location of treasure, or may even come in human form to guide the seeker to the location of the treasure. In both cases, the devil is not to be trusted but has come only to lie and to divert the seeker away from his true path, and away from remembrance of God.

There are popular "prayers" (even some Qur'anic verses) read over talismans at night in order to enchant them; these talismans will then be taken before sunrise to the suspected site and spread out in a way that can be understood through divination to hold esoteric information about the treasure. As one example of this, if the talismans are thrown and all land in one place, this is a sure sign that the treasure is buried where they landed; it is also, however, a sign that the site is guarded by a jinni which can only be avoided by using a traditional spell, or prayer called the *istikhāra*[7].

Looting and its relationship with visual, audio, and printed media

With the development of media in its various forms, and the widespread use of the internet and smartphones, there has been increased interest across all strata of Jordanian society in accessing information on these topics online. There are pages circulating on the Internet, from Jordanian domains, dealing with these issues as is illustrated below. Government media, such as television and radio, has lost some of its role in influencing Jordanian public opinion; additionally, a large sector of the Jordanian public does not believe government-sponsored media, and therefore a lot of the Jordanian population prefer to use electronic media as a means of communication, and to use international television stations for news of different events[8].

The speed of circulation in the various news media contributes significantly to the transfer of any social phenomenon to a larger segment of the community. Of course, excavations and illicit trafficking operations have also

seen major development in this area. Videos which provide tutorials for illegal excavation operations and which explain the interpretation of symbols have appeared. Treasure-hunters use these videos, and information about how to locate treasures is abundant on Arabic Internet pages.

There are now various Internet sites in Arabic containing a multitude of stories that support the theory of access to gold and treasures. As it can be seen from the following examples, these websites contain pictures of the traditional treasure hunting symbols and their implications for how to get to the treasure. Treasure hunters can use websites, set up like official reference guides explaining the meanings of common symbols, which purport to explain how to interpret the signs for directions on where to find and dig for treasures. The freedom of the media and easy access to smartphones has in fact caused a huge increase in looting in Jordan because so many people find these instruction manuals online. This is for a combination of reasons: people for example are increasingly reluctant to pay for professional advice on looting, including the common practice of consulting a sheikh, who will typically offer to help a person to obtain the treasure. Having received payment in kind, such as tools and spices, the sheikh fails to render his services. People turn to the Internet having had a bad past experience of this kind.

Furthermore, my interviews[9] found that several people had the same videos and photos of artifacts that they claimed to own, i.e. there were no additional unique photographs or videos in the set but an entire set was presented to me by several different people each claiming that these were unique and solely their own. It was evidently impossible that they could all own exactly the same artifacts. Several people attempted to sell me these artifacts. This suggests to me that each person that we interviewed wanted to present himself as a very informed specialist when it is very possible that these identical photographs and videos were found on the internet and that none of my interview subjects possessed any of the artifacts they claimed to be in a position to sell.[10]

Thus we can see that the way information about treasure hunting disseminates in Jordan has changed with the development of media in the last decade or so. Furthermore, it is very common to hear stories, none of which have any proven foundation in fact, that whenever there is news of any excavation or treasure find that a helicopter always arrives within a few minutes of the news, the treasure is loaded into it and it is flown away. This is believed to be evidence that important dignitaries are involved in looting archaeological sites but there is no evidence for this. In the mid-eighties and nineties of the last century, news was transported orally and generally similar stories about where to find the treasure and helicopters were heard. Today such stories travel much faster via the internet and therefore more people are involved in looting today than previously.

The most striking example of the role of the media in giving a wrong picture of illegal excavations and theft is that of the Jordanian media's covering of the story of "*Ajloun gold*". All this demonstrates the keenness of the local communities in Jordan to gain money through illegal excavations. The widespread use of media (visual, audio, and printed media) is simply exacerbating a situation that is caused both by economic pressures and, as we have seen, a corresponding religious-traditional context. There may also be a lack of what could be termed a "historical consciousness" in the Western sense. While this gets us into the highly problematic topic of cultural relativity, it is certainly arguable that Western notions of historical consciousness, as enshrined in UNESCO rules, may not be universal and are

themselves not easy to universalise. Other countries and cultures for example may have a different sense of the past, one that is less driven by material remains.

Looting and the Internet

There is a great deal of information currently circulating on Arabic language websites offering advice to amateur looters on how to locate buried treasures. This usually takes the form of symbols and "treasure maps", both natural and man-made features which are commonly believed to be esoteric signposts to hidden gold. One merely has to perform an Internet search for "hidden gold" or similar terms on an Arabic language search engine to discover a wealth of literature on this topic, most of which is popularly held to be completely true. Shown here are just three examples from a website of this kind, imparting supposedly secret clues about where hoards of treasure will be buried in the Jordanian landscape; these examples show just what kind of information is circulating amongst those who would like to become rich through looting. Example 1 (Fig. 6) claims that a treasure can be found, should the seeker find one stone containing one hole, located in the vicinity of another stone containing four holes. If there is a cairn nearby these two stones, it is given as fact that the hoard will be found underneath the cairn. It will be witnessed that many of these examples require a lot of exact conditions to be fulfilled[11].

Example 2 (Fig. 7) shows a stone bearing an inscription of a snake located next to a well, which in turn is located next to a small stone. The assumption is that the treasure will be buried five meters below the stone[12]. In example 3 (Fig. 8), the seeker has come across a stone bearing the symbol of a fish. This stone is found in an area containing a river, and the seeker must then locate the second stone which contains a square hole, since this stone marks the location of the treasure.

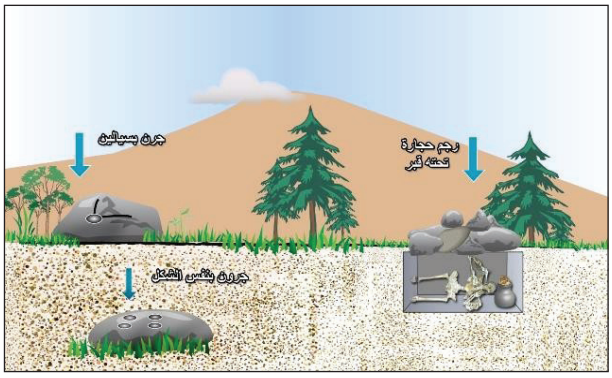

Fig. 6: Example 1 Claims that a Treasure can be found should the Seeker Find one Stone Containing one Hole.

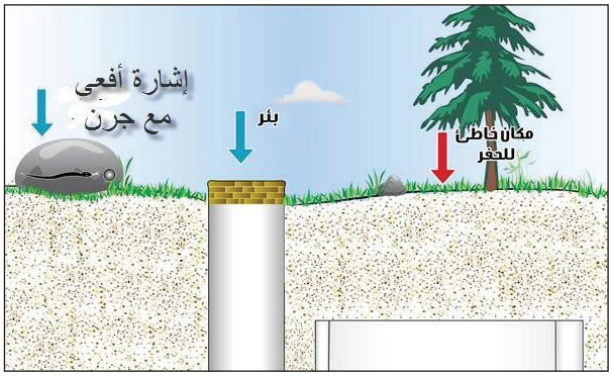

Fig. 7: Example 2 Shows a Stone Bearing an Inscription of a Snake Located Next to a Well.

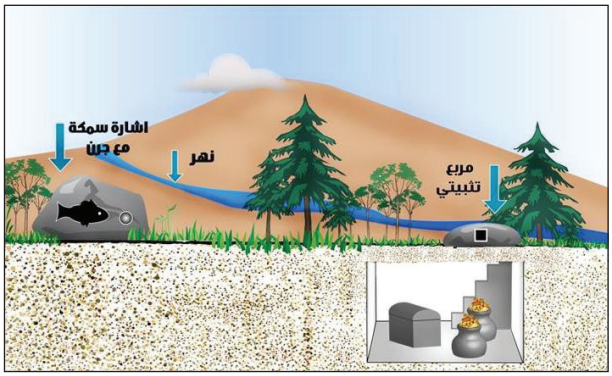

Fig. 8: Example 3, the Seeker has Come Across a Stone Bearing the Symbol of a Fish.

Through interviews with looters and by searching the Internet, we have compiled a list of what are considered by looters operating in Jordan to be clues to treasures. These "treasure map" style clues that are listed in the table below are original research which cannot be found in any other academic sources. The research

is partly based on anecdotal evidence but also on common Jordanian cultural knowledge. The latter is considered to be common knowledge without an academic source in just the same way as an owl is associated with wisdom in some western cultures, or in the way that a black cat is associated with bad luck. It is striking that there is a very strong similarity between the local wisdom regarding these symbols and the information that can be found online[13]. There are many figures posting on the internet who set themselves up as experts in this field and thus receive a strong following; the information they give is exactly the same as that which can be heard from the local people however, showing that the belief in these symbols follows an established folkloric pattern.

Based on the conversations held with numerous people who illegally look for buried treasures, particularly gold, and the online available web information posted by persons who consider themselves experts in the field of looting and finding buried treasures, there are a number of signs and symbols believed by these people to refer to the presence of buried treasures. Hereunder is a list of a number of these symbols and their presumed explanations (Table 1):

Table 1: a list of a number of these symbols and their presumed explanations

No.	Symbol	Explanation
1	Eagle	You will find a kingly tomb full of gold, and should dig at the site where the eagle is looking.
2	Owl	The treasure is guarded by a jinni, and a ritual is required to cause the jinn to allow access to the treasure.
3	Spider	The treasure is located in a well, and you should dig just next to the symbol of a spider; one should dig with caution because this symbol may indicate the presence of a jinni.
4	Frog	For every centimeter long the picture of the frog is, the seeker should walk one meter away from it and dig the same number of meters below the ground.
5	Lizard	See the entry for frog.
6	Pigeon	The treasure is under the feet of the pigeon and it is certain to be a unique cave containing precious stones.
7	Camel hoof	The seeker should walk half as many meters away from the stone as the length of the hoof, and then dig to the same depth.
8	Bull's head	This is usually shown with just one eye; the digging should be where the one eye is looking.
9	Bull's head in a grave; red	See *bull's head*
10	Lion's head	Jewish tombs will be found, and digging should be on the right hand side.
11	Lamb's head	See *bull's head*
12	Human head	Dig where the human is looking.
13	Camel's head	Dig under the head.
14	Horseshoe	The tomb of a rider, likely to contain weapons.
15	Cat's or lion's paw	The grave is guarded by a jinni so caution is advised.
16	Eye without eyebrows	The treasure is opposite the eye.
17	Eye with eyebrows	The hairs of the eyebrow should be counted and this gives the number of meters that should be walked away from the stone for digging.
18	Human hand	See whether the fingers are touching or separate. If they are together, this indicates the presence of a jinni. If the hand is spread open with the fingers apart there is no jinn.
19	Human feet	The length of the foot in centimeters gives the number of meters away that the treasure is located.

20	Human penis	The direction the penis is facing indicates the location of the treasure.
21	Human vagina	This indicates the presence of a female tomb that will be located under a huge stone, which conceals the treasure.
22	Cross	The cross can take many forms, but the treasure is always located under one of the four points of the cross.
23	Dagger	Depending on whether it is a Roman or a Turkish dagger; this always indicates the presence of weapons.
24	Sword	This symbolizes a warrior; the treasure will be underneath the tombstone.
25	Bow (and arrow)	In this instance, the seeker should bring a real bow and arrow and should fire it, digging wherever the arrow lands.
26	Spear	See *bow (and arrow)*
27	Jar	This should have two handles, one smaller than the other. The digging should take place where the smaller handle points.
28	Triangle	This indicates the presence of a mummy.
29	Circle	This indicates the presence of a ring of graves containing ceramics but no gold.
30	Stars	This shows that there are Jewish tombs.
31	Sun	This has different forms. It indicates male tombs which should be Roman or Macedonian in origin, and contain a lot of gold.
32	Crown	This is a royal tomb and the amount of gold in the tomb depends on the shape and size of the crown.
33	Fish	Always found next to a water source; the treasure is located under the largest rock in the vicinity.
34	Horse	Tomb for a rider containing weapons.
35	Snakes	The length of the snake in centimeters shows how many meters the seeker should walk away to dig.
36	Keys	This indicates the door of a grave.
37	Flower	Christian tombs full of jewelry.
38	Seven holes	The seeker should walk seven meters and dig three meters.

These people stressed, during the conversations, on the importance of distinguishing two different types of symbols from each other, namely those symbols which are engraved (*ḥafr*) and those in relief (*nafr*), because only symbols in relief (*nafr*) are valid for the above interpretations. All of the participants in the interviews said that *ḥafr* and *nafr* symbols had different meanings and all offered the same explanation of what these different versions of the symbols mean.

The sociology of looting in contemporary Jordan

Numerous studies have been conducted to look into the looting of antiquities in both Jordan and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) (Bisheh 2001; Kersel 2005- 2015; Al-Houdalieh 2006- 2015; Brodie and Contreras 2012 and Politis 2002), and in the last two years they focussed mainly on Iraq and Syria. These studies investigated the various reasons for looting including the economic, social and religious factors. The looting in Jordan, as compared to the OPT, is characterized by being primitive and less organized and has less possibility due to extensive security measures prohibiting this practice. Most looters in Jordan use simple tools to dig for archaeological artifacts in order to avoid being discovered, while in the OPT more advanced and heavier machinery are used for this purpose taking the advantage of the inadequate security situation there. Al-Houdalieh reported that the looting in the OPT is mainly due to shortage of employment and

the indecision of the Israeli government towards Palestinian looting, where the artifacts flow ultimately into the Israeli economy. However, these factors are not applicable to the situation in Jordan. Moreover, Al-Houdalieh (2012) reported that the overwhelming majority of the interviewed self-described looters in the OPT (a sample of 31 Muslim males with an age range of 30-60 years) are literate with 90% of them having some kind of educational achievement and 13% of them having completed a higher education study. Nevertheless, none of them has found a meaningful job after study (Al-Houdalieh 2012: 108-9). Furthermore, Al-Houdalieh (2012) indicated that 71% of the interviewed looters in the OPT reported that the main motive for looting being a rapid financial gain. Proulx (2013) pointed out that most of the surveyed archaeologists reported that they have had some sort of relations with looters in the trade of antiquities. According to Proulx, there are a number of factors as to why looters would relate to professional archaeologists. These include ego; the need to have more knowledge about the significance and commercial value of the looted artefact, the aspiration to gain information on archaeological site locations, techniques for interpreting artifacts, site material and locations; the naivety on the part of some looters who may see professional archaeologist as sympathetic to their activities; and, finally, for entertainment looters may carry out anti-establishment acts to interfere with archaeological work (ibid: 121) [(14)].

Collectors and the international trade of looted artifacts

Private collections of looted antiquities, whether they are knowingly traded as such, represent the "demand" side of a global commodity chain. There have been several recent demonstrations of the correlation between the rise in collector interest in antiquities and the rise in incidences of archaeological sites potentially bearing such antiquities being looted. In a pioneering study, Gill and Chippindale (1997) show that as collectors' interest in, and demand for, Cycladic figurines increased in the late twentieth century, so too did the number of unauthorised excavations at Cycladic archaeological sites; the authors thus demonstrated a strong correlation between dealer demand and popular looting (ibid: 601; Proulx 2013: 117). Indeed, there have been some recent legal actions against this "demand", that is, against the wealthy collectors of antiquities that have knowingly traded in illegally excavated artifacts. Brodie et al 2006, for example, give an analysis of various laws and legal bodies in the US, the UK and Switzerland which are attempting to combat the demand for the illegal artifacts using the global supply chain (this will be described more fully below). Such an approach, whether consciously or not, echoes the call of Miller (1982) to change the norms and behaviours of the collectors rather than the looters of antiquities. Miller (ibid) argues that it is the collectors who are principally responsible for creating the market for looted archaeology; he asserts that if the collectors would voluntarily stop buying illegal artifacts then the profit incentive for looting – that is, the incentive – would cease and looting would stop altogether (Miller 1982: 42).

However, Miller found that collectors, both institutional and individual, appeared to lack familiarity with the negative effects of their aims of obtaining valued historical artifacts and also recognised that the institutional presentation of looted artifacts (his example is of Mayan material culture in American museums) made the circulation and collection of looted artifacts seem respectable. This was an attack on the private and institutional "demand" side of the global trade in looted archaeological material. He argued that involving such collectors in the archaeological collection of artifacts and other

similar practices would educate them about the deleterious effects of looting, and of the private collecting that generated the demand for it; and, indeed, one organisation did just that. Earthwatch, based in Massachusetts, provides opportunities for persons interested in archaeology to participate in professionally conducted fieldwork, and has been found to change the perceptions of some collectors. Through their participation in Earthwatch projects, some collectors were reported even to have given up collecting archaeological artifacts. Their experiences during Earthwatch projects convinced them that archaeology's mission, which is to reconstruct the past, is incompatible with the private collection of artifacts (ibid: 44). However, of course, both private collecting, once an activity of the western world but now a global activity undertaken by the wealthy in developing countries such as in the Gulf, and looting continue today. The next section further explores the relationship between the two activities.

Private collectors in Jordan

Many people in Jordan have private collections of relics; by practical definition such people are wealthy, and may well have access to social or political capital. It should be noted that some such collectors have contributed to scientific understandings of the country's and region's material (and other) history. For example, the private collection of Dr. Nayef al-Qoussus, housed in the Jordan Ahli Bank Numismatic Museum[15] (itself related to the Jordan Ahli Bank), is an example of a scientifically important private collection in the country. Dr. al-Qoussus acquired this collection during his career as a dentist in Amman (it is impossible, of course, to give any conclusions as to the provenance [find site] of such artifacts). As the size of the collection increased, al-Qoussus became an expert in the field of numismatics; his coins' collection has now become the largest private collection of coins in Jordan. After his retirement, the Jordan Ahli Bank bought his collection and established its own museum, which has become a centre for the study of numismatics. Al-Qoussus is now an active scholar of numismatics, and has contributed to the development of several research projects.

Interviews for the study

The interviews for this study consisted of 75 individuals concerned with looting, that is to say, people who claim to be able to obtain and sell antiquities who were willing to discuss their involvement in the illegal trade of artifacts. Before conducting the interviews for this research we explained to each prospective interview subject that, by participating, their responses would be strictly used for academic research and that their personal details would remain anonymous. In accordance with the American Anthropological Association's "do not harm" tenet, interviewees' identities are confidential, a requirement of any study involving human subjects (American Anthropological Association 2012)[16]. The interviews were all conducted in Arabic and then translated into English, with some minor corrections of grammar and changes of vocabulary necessary to render responses into good, idiomatic English.

Interviews with people concerned with looting[17]

To reach the largest number of antiquities dealers and those who are involved in illegal excavations, three different regions of Jordan were chosen: Amman, As-Salt, and ʿAjloun. The interviews were designed to reveal the reasons that compel those individuals carrying out looting to trade in antiquities or illegally excavate, the means and tools that they use to perform these tasks, and the role of religion

in incentivizing or de-incentivizing those who participate in these activities.

Analysis of Questionnaires by Group D participants

75 individuals received the questionnaires relating to the illegal excavation and trading of antiquities. These individuals, whose identities will not be disclosed in this study at their request, were all Jordanian Muslim males between the ages of 18 and 67 (Table 3) from ʿAjloun, As-Salt and Amman. Despite the wish to remain anonymous all of the interviewees spoke of illegal excavations and the looting process with confidence, and without fear of punishment. The interviewees were all educated, their levels of education recorded in (Table 3), but their knowledge of archaeological excavations and artifacts came from such online sources as Facebook and various Arabic websites. Those with graduate level degrees received their degrees from Jordanian universities, and have never travelled outside of the country. These degrees are in the social sciences such as education and law, rather than any scientific disciplines.

Table 2: Ages of the Individuals

Age bracket	Number of individuals
18–29	14
30–39	25
40-49	20
50-59	11
60 and above	05

Table 3: Educational Level of the Individuals

Educational level	Number of individuals
Illiterate	00
Completed only primary school (6th grade)	12
Completed high school (12th grade)	23
University graduate	28
Graduate Studies, MA and PhD	12

- **Question: How many times have you participated in illegal digging/ excavations?**

All the interviewed subjects confirmed their participation in more than a single illegal excavation. Forty participated between 2 to 3 times, 19 participated between 4 to 5 times and 16 participated more than twenty times in the search for antiquities, (Fig. 9).

- **How many people were involved with you in the illegal digging/excavations?**

Fifty participated with 3 to 4 people and 25 participated with 1 to 2 people in searching for antique objects. These findings reveal that those involved in illegal excavations prefer to work in small groups, preferably belonging to the same family or town, for reasons of assured trust and secrecy, (Fig. 10).

- **Question: Have you used heavy equipment in the illegal digging/ excavations, mechanized equipment, or other power implements?**

Four of those interviewed used heavy tools on their own private property claiming to clean the land from rocks to make it more suitable for agricultural purposes. Many of those interviewed believed that it is quite a daunting task to use those heavy tools as their work will be revealed and witnesses might report the activity to the police.

- **Question: Were the excavations performed during the day or at night?**

Nine individuals performed their excavation works on their private property in the morning, and otherwise, digging occurred during the

night in more remote places such as deserted archaeological sites.

- **Question: Was gold, or other valuable objects, found on site?**

All confirmed not to have found any gold or treasures and that, frequently, corroded metal coins were found which would have been difficult to identify. Numerous fragments of pottery, glass, and bone were also frequently found. Some people had additionally found rings, earrings, and bracelets.

- **Question: Could you discern the era to which these found pieces belong?**

All the subjects confirmed their ignorance of history and that during searches for gold any found pottery sherds were immediately disposed. Although many are frustrated following long hours of search during which no gold was found, the subjects had no concept of the significance of the found pottery sherds and that by breaking them information concerning a period in history is lost.

- **Question: Were you assisted by a Sheikh to find gold or treasure?**

27 received assistance from a sheikh to reveal places where gold or antiquities objects could be found. One of those interviewed reported that information from an extremely well-compensated sheikh had turned out to be useless[18].

- **Question: Did you ever fear jinn during excavations? What were you afraid of the most?**

Twenty of those interviewed feared the appearance of jinn during excavations after being convinced by stories that jinn could appear to those searching for gold or antiquities. However, the largest source of fear was the police, as 33 of those interviewed feared they could lose their jobs if they were found to be excavating if they faced criminal charges. 22

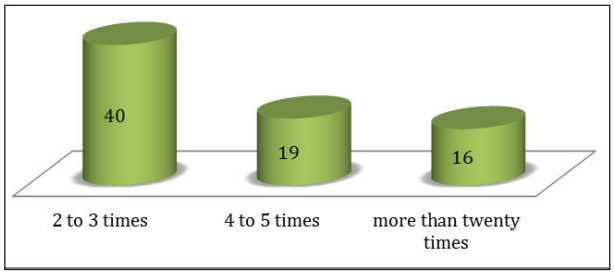

Fig. 9: Answer to the Question: How Many Times have You Participated in Illegal Digging/ Excavations?

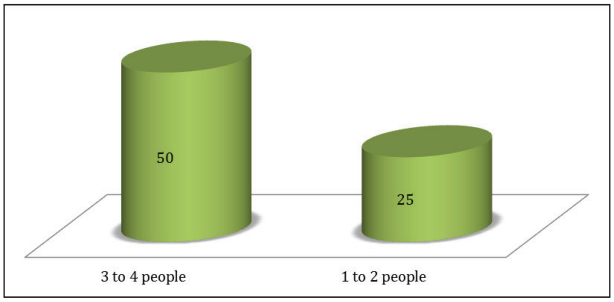

Fig. 10: Answer to the Question: How Many People were Involved with you in the Illegal Digging/Excavations?

feared landowners, who could have shot those searching for antiquities. One subject feared general passersby, (Fig. 11).

- **Question: How many days did you work for on a single site?**

Most of those searching for treasures or antiquities worked for more than 3 days on a site. 40 individuals worked for 3 days, 21 worked for 1 to 2 day(s), and, the rest worked on a site for only one day. Those falling under the last category feared landowners who could have discovered their excavations on a second day and so worked for only one day, (Fig. 12).

- **Question: Have you found, or been attacked by, any animal or insect during the excavations?**

All of the interviewed subjects confirmed that they found insects and animals. 16 found a scorpion, 40 found a spider, 4 found a snake, 12 found a dog, 15 found a frog, and 9 found a lizard. This is significant as the experience of being attacked by a dangerous or poisonous animal during the course of excavations has a large

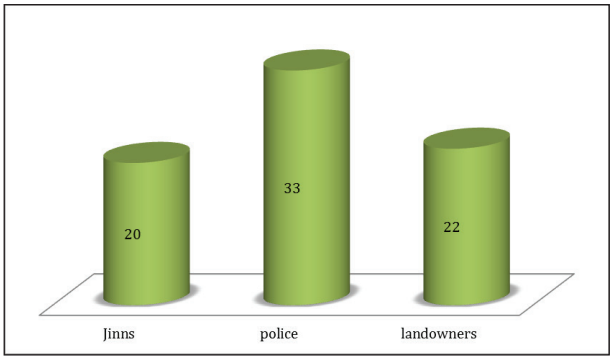

Fig. 11: Answer to the Question: Did you Ever Fear Jinn During Excavations? what were you Afraid of the Most?

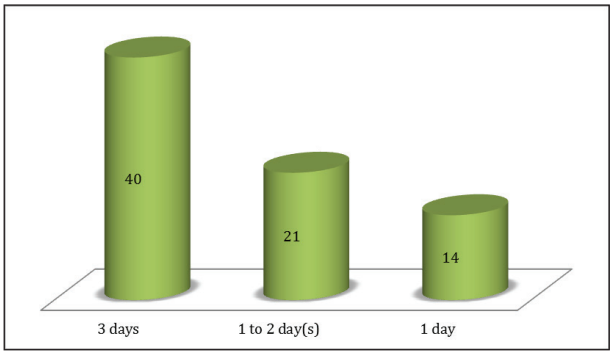

Fig. 12: Answer to the Question: How Many Days Did you Work for on a Single Site?

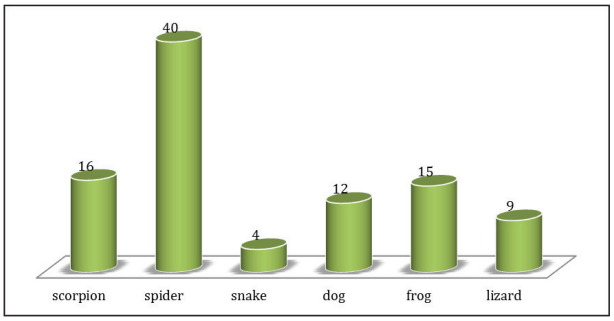

Fig. 13: Answer to the Question: Have you found, or Been Attacked by, any Animal or Insect During the Excavations?

impact on deterring people from taking part in future excavations. The fact that such animals are encountered when excavating a grave meant that some participants in the questionnaire believed that there were supernatural powers at work: rather than having been attacked by a dog or a scorpion some believed that they were attacked by a *jinni* who had adopted the guise of an animal. One person for example recounted the fact that he became very ill after one such excavation and believed that a *jinni* was responsible. we think it is possible that he was bitten by a scorpion but, not having seen it, attributed the cause of the subsequent severe significance to supernatural powers, (Fig. 13).

- **Question: Did you pay to get information on the excavation site?**

None of those interviewed paid to get information on the wherebouts of sites where a treasure could be found and they have all agreed that most of the budget went into financing the costs of consulting a sheikh or buying the materials and tools needed by the team for an excavation. It was considered necessary to pay for a sheikh to help extract treasure from the site but a sheikh's services are never required to find a site: you first find the site, then you contact the sheikh and he claims he does not need money for himself but to give it to the *jinn* and to buy tools and materials.

- **Question: Do you have a video clip, or photos, on your mobile phone showing antique objects?**

Sixty of those interviewed had a video clip or photos of antique objects or fragments on their smartphones. During this study, many of those interviewed submitted some of those photos and video clips which turned out to be from countries other than Jordan, more specifically: Egypt and Iraq. It is possible that the artifacts have since been brought to Jordan but further research is required to determine this[19].

- **Question: Do you read articles about excavation processes on the Internet, journals or newspapers?**

All of the subjects confirmed that they had read articles on the Internet related to excavation processes and tried obtaining information on decoding symbols that could potentially guide them to the place where a treasure, or an ancient object, was hidden. Many indicated that they were interested in devices that could determine the presence of gold and many had additionally

corresponded with others outside of Jordan to purchase such a device. However, the stringent requirements placed on imported materials led them to abandon the acquisition process. Found gold items were the most important, followed by coins, while pottery sherds were worthless from their perspective.

- **Question: Can you interpret those signs/ symbols which advise you on finding the location of treasure?**

Many pointed out the importance of symbols in identifying a place where gold or other objects could be found (see section on symbols: **Looting and the Internet**); those who participated more than three times in excavations claimed to have sufficient experience in decoding symbols.

- **Question: Have you seen anyone who was attacked by jinn during an excavation or shortly thereafter?**

None of the subjects had witnessed someone being tortured by a jinni following a search for gold and twenty of those interviewed had only indirect knowledge that such events had previously occurred.

- **Question: Do you agree with this statement, yes or no: "I shall deliver any antiquities found to the museum, or the country, in return of an appropriate compensation"?**

All of those who participated confirmed that they never returned the found pieces to the Jordanian government or any office of Antiquities, as they believed that if returned to the government, such pieces would be sold for the benefit of "important people"[20].

- **Question: Do you agree with this statement, yes or no: "I will stop searching for antiquities if I earn a living wage?"**

Fifty of those interviewed confirmed that they would stop searching for the objects if they earned a living wage. These respondents indicated that the primary reason for looting was the desirability of obtaining large amounts of money as quickly as possible. Owing to the often very-physically intense nature of obtaining antiquities, for example digging deep into the ground and cutting through rock, I believe it is very possible that it is indeed true that they would stop looting if well-paid jobs were available in other sectors.

- **Question: Does religion forbid the searching for and marketing of antiquities?**

45 of the subjects were ignorant of the perspective of religion on illegal excavations and the search for gold; however, they were more inclined to agree that religion does not forbid the search for gold or ancient objects. Thirty of the subjects had a slightly different opinion: believing that while religion does not forbid such activities, a Zakāt should be paid.

- **Question: Do you know any antiquities traders in Jordan?**

The spread of these activities contributes to the destruction of many archaeological objects in Jordan. The employees of the Museum and Office of Antiquities in As-Salt had the position that the implementation of sanctions will contribute to the reduction of these activities; which is contrary to the subjects' opinion, who think that the government only enforces such laws when they know that members of the public are likely to acquire large sums of money. Consequently, it is better to raise the public's awareness of the fiscal, historical and other intangible values of the objects. At least, educating the people who carry out these activities will allow them to preserve those items instead of breaking them.

In addition to what was already mentioned, markets and private shops play a significant role in selling antiquities. Many of those interviewed mentioned that they used to sell

antiquities to those shops cheaply. The owners of those shops are wont to agree to buy old coin pieces provided that they are in a good condition and never cleaned so that they can be sent to an expert to be cleaned. The subjects claimed that shop owners knew people who reside outside Jordan to whom those antiquities could be sold for large amounts of money. The information derived from these interviews and questionnaires all supports the findings discussed at the beginning of this chapter. This section has discussed one important aspect concerning looting, which is involvement of a variety of different societies in looting. This leads us to the conclusion.

Conclusion

The study has shown that looters do not take into account the religious nature of a place in targeting it for looting, that is to say whether it is Islamic or non-Islamic. For example, looters will not be deterred by digging an Islamic grave to find artifacts, which is treated in exactly the same way as a non-Islamic grave. Another interesting discovery made during the course of this study is that looters sometimes take the Qur'an with them for protection. For example, people interviewed for this study mentioned that they sometimes read passages from the Qur'an when they are standing in a grave that is being dug up in the hope of finding treasure. This is to ward off jinn, or spirits, who may try to harm looters.

Also addressed is the role of religious figures in connection with looting in Jordan. Our study has presented the important role that sheikhs, or elders, play in looting. They present themselves as very pious and knowledgeable about Islam, as well as being experienced in dealing with *jinn*, which looters are afraid of. Looters sometimes approach a sheikh and ask for help with finding gold and dealing with *jinn*, and typically he agrees to help in exchange for a payment. This research has found that in most cases those sheikhs who receive payment in this way do not subsequently offer any help. Those who did do anything in exchange for the initial payment agreed to visit the site and then related to the looters the need to purchase specific, rare and very expensive incense in order to subdue the *jinn* in the area of the artifacts the looters hoped to obtain. We came across examples of looters in Jordan paying a sheikh tens of thousands of JDs to purchase the correct incense from India. In each case that we discovered, the sheikh ran off with the money and provided no further assistance.

This study has also identified the differences in socio-economic factors that affect the looting of antiquities in Jordan. For example, this research demonstrated that people who work in looting are from all levels of society, including wealthier people who worked in academia or as civil servants, as well as members of the poorest groups in Jordanian society. An interesting discovery of this research has been that differences in education level had an impact on looting activity. In all cases we studied, all people who participated in looting took part in digging up graves, both Islamic and non-Islamic. However, those who had the least education were more likely to express anxiety about needing to dig up an Islamic grave, but were unconcerned about non-Islamic graves. Those who were very well educated, for example holders of Masters degrees or PhDs, expressed no anxiety about digging up Islamic graves.

This study has shown that modern forms of media have spread looting, such that more people are involved in looting today than there were in the past. This is owing to the widespread ownership of smartphones and access to the Internet. This has led to the creation of Arabic-language websites which give instructions on how to get involved in looting. Interestingly, all of those who participated in the survey said, when asked, that they never used the Internet

to buy or sell artifacts. However, everyone who participated said that they only use the Internet to obtain information about looting, such as information explaining the meanings of symbols found at archaeological sites.

We have also sought to assess whether the phenomenon of looting is new or old. Looting is not a new phenomenon for Middle Eastern or Jordanian society. This study has also shown how looting has changed in modern times compared with the past. This study has demonstrated however that looting is even more widespread in times of economic hardship. Today there is more information available about looting compared with in the past, thanks to modern media. This media has also meant that there is a huge, modern global black-market for antiquities compared with in the past.

In conclusion, we believe that it is our duty as archaeologists to seek to record and preserve history and that there is a role for better documentation and education to achieve this. It is important that further research is given to these areas. Given the extremely volatile current situation in the Middle East, it is necessary to aim to bring about more widespread, systematic documentation of archaeological and heritage sites and artifacts. This is so we as archaeologists have a record of historical and cultural heritage in the event that things are damaged, destroyed or stolen during unstable situations, such as the outbreak of war or periods of economic instability. Education and training are required to teach people the intrinsic value of history and archaeology in a way that is not purely monetary. In this way we can hope to both diminish looting and increase community involvement in preserving historic sites and artifacts.

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ملخّص: يهدف هذا البحث لتقصي مسألة أعمال نهب الأثار وسرقتها، والتي ما تزال منتشرة في الأردن؛ إذ يناقش أعمال نهب الآثار وتسويقها، من خلال مقابلات شخصية مع عديد من الأشخاص الذين امتهنوا هذه الأعمال؛ ويتناول البحث كذلك دور كل من الإنترنت والدين والعُرف، فيما يتعلق بانتشار الحفريات الآثارية غير القانونية في الأردن. إضافة إلى ذلك، يناقش البحث الرموز والإشارات التي تدل على «الكنز» بالتفصيل. يشتمل البحث على ٧٥ مقابلة أجريت مع أفراد انخرطوا في تسويق الآثار والحفريات غير القانونية، يقطنون السلط وعجلون وعمان؛ إذ تبين أن الكسب المادي هو أهم الدوافع لممارسة نهب الآثار، والقيام بأعمال التنقيب غير القانونية.

Notes

(1) http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/policy/wesp/wesp_current/2014wesp_country_classification.pdf [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(2) The work on collecting by Susan Pearce and the volumes edited by her on this topic

(3) http://portal.unesco.org/en/ev.php-URL_ID=13039&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(4) The Law No. 21 for the year 1988 promulgated in the Official Gazette, issue No. 3540 dated 17/3/1988 and the amending Law No. 23 for the year 2004 promulgated in the Official Gazette, issue No. 4662 dated 1/6/2004.

(5) The Looting of the Iraq Museum in Context. In: Catastrophe! The Looting and Destruction of Iraq's Past. Edited by Geoff Emberling and Katharyn Hanson, 2008, Oriental Institute Museum Publications (OIMP) / OIMP 28. P. 14.

(6) https://asadullahali.files.wordpress.com/2012/10/ibn_khaldun-al_muqaddimah.pdf: THE MUQADDIMAH: Abd ar-Raḥmān bin Muḥammed ibn Khaldūn, translated by Franz Rosenthal "It should be known that many weak-minded persons in cities hope to discover property under the surface of the earth and to make some profit from it. They believe that all the property of the nations of the past was stored underground and sealed with magic talismans. These seals, they believe, can be broken only by those who may chance upon the (necessary) knowledge and can offer the proper incense, prayers, and sacrifices to break them. The inhabitants of the cities in Ifriqiyah believe that the European Christians who lived in Ifriqiyah before Islam, buried their property and entrusted its (hiding place) to written lists, until such time as they might find a way to dig it up again. The inhabitants of the cities in the East hold similar beliefs with regard to the nations of the Copts, the Romans (Byzantines), and the Persians.» [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(7) http://www.islamicacademy.org/html/Dua/How_to_do_Istakhara.htm [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(8) https://ar-ar.facebook.com/ertygd/; http://www.moutini.com/index.php/articles/105-uncategoriz ed/7353-2014-03-24-22-33-40; http://konouz.ahlamontada.com/t1033-topic [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(9) Before conducting the interviews for this research I explained to each prospective interview subject that, by participating, their responses would be strictly used for academic research and that their personal details would remain anonymous. In accordance with the American Anthropological Association's "do not harm" tenet, interviewees' identities are confidential, a requirement of any study involving human subjects (American Anthropological Association 2012). American Anthropological Association. 2012. Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibilities. http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/ [Accessed April 1. 2020]

(10) These individuals attempt to show their possession of these photographs as a kind of boasting and for the purpose of proving that they have both knowledge and expertise in searching for archaeological finds.

(11) http://www.moutini.com/index.php/articles/105-uncategorized/7353-2014-03-24-22-33-40

(12) http://www.moutini.com/index.php/articles/105-uncategorized/7353-2014-03-24-22-33-40 [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(13) 13. http://www.moutini.com/index.php/articles/105-uncategorized/7353-2014-03-24-22-33-40 [Accessed April 1. 2020]. 1278-topic;http://www.aghnam.com.sa/vb/showthread.php?t=166520; http://www.tafawk.com/vb/ showthread.php?t=8687 [Accessed April 1. 2020].

(14) The first reason is ego ("discoverer's bias" and bragging rights). Second, desire to obtain insight on cultural significance/interpretation and commercial values specific to the specimen(s). Third, desire to gain information on archeological site locations, techniques for interpreting artifacts, site materials, locations, etc. [F]ourth, ignorance for example in that some looters are naïve enough to see professional archeologists as sympathetic to their activities, etc. Fifth, some looters are anti-government, anti-science, anti-academic to the point that they enjoy "messing with" archaeologists—pure entertainment for them, i.e. "Look what I found—you can't 'touch' this or me." (Proulx 2013: 121).

(15) http://ahli.com/en/jordan/about-us/product/numismatic-museum [Accessed September 30. 2017].

(16) American Anthropological Association. 2012. Statement on Ethics: Principles of Professional Responsibilities. http://ethics.americananthro.org/category/statement/ [Accessed September 30. 2017].

(17) Regarding this group of interviews, when it came to formulating my questions we were particularly inspired by the work of al-Houdalieh concerning research into looting in Israel/ Palestine.

(18) Of the numerous stories that were told during the interviews, the funniest was that one of the Sheikhs had asked for three chickens for use in revealing the location in a cave where a treasure was thought to be located. The chickens were sent to the forecasted cave. After long hours of searching nothing was found, consequently, the chickens were eaten over lunch.

(19) These individuals attempt to show their possession of these photographs as a kind of boasting and for the purpose of proving that they have both knowledge and expertise in searching for archaeological finds.

(20) Based on the interviews held with these individuals, they pointed out that they have found some currency pieces, pottery and glass shards

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