

# More Than Just Money

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# More Than Just Money



## Human-Object Relationships in Low-End Collecting

Diāna Bērziņa

**Abstract** Art crime often is viewed in terms of being profit driven. Although it is the case in many contexts, it is hard to fully justify this viewpoint in the low-end antiquities trade. The focus on high financial value portrays an art crime as a clear-cut issue, however alternative engagement spaces such as online forums provide the hint that art crime is more than just about money. This chapter presents data that was gathered during a cross-sectional analysis of Russian treasure hunting forums and discusses the main trends observed from the data and offers a glimpse into the low-value antiquities trade that takes place in these spaces. It is argued that in the low-value antiquities trade, potentially even in the wider market, financial value is intertwined with other values, it is possible to witness emergence of human-object relationships, and make a case that an object should not be only viewed as a passive thing with a price tag.

### 1 Introduction

Cultural heritage consists of both tangible and intangible heritage. ‘Cultural heritage’ itself, consisting of ‘culture’ and ‘heritage’, is a complex term to define (for a more detailed discussion see Blake, 2000). Each component of the term is not neutral and at times they have been embroiled in conflicts resulting from different meanings attached to them. For instance, in the past, ‘culture’ was viewed in the terms of European culture, and therefore indigenous peoples encountered by Europeans were viewed as “inferior” as they were viewed as not having culture in “a European understanding of that term” (Koehler, 2007, p. 105). Similarly, heritage can be argued to be “an ideological construct” (Anico, 2008, p. 67) and its meaning and importance is multi-layered and can represent different things to different people. While this chapter is not about semantics, it is important to note that even these commonly used terms are laden with different, sometimes competing values and

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interests. This study almost exclusively discusses tangible cultural heritage, more precisely archaeological objects, but it is recognised that the tangible and the intangible are interlinked in a “symbiotic relationship” so that objects are evidence of “underlying norms and values” (Bouchenaki, 2003, p. 1).

When it comes to tangible cultural heritage, the high financial value<sup>1</sup> of looted, stolen, or trafficked objects of cultural heritage are often discussed in the media. From movies, like *Entrapment* (1999) to headlines like ‘Million-dollar Art Heist’, art crime conjures a particular image in the public mind—one of a gentleman art thief who steals high value paintings. However, art crime can involve anything from coins, paintings, antiquities, to even vintage cars and watches (Korner, 2016). Similarly, the crime itself can involve anything from theft, vandalism, smuggling of antiquities, to white-collar crime, such as art fraud (Durney & Proulx, 2011). In other words, art crime is as broad and varied as the values we attach to art (Durney & Proulx, 2011). For instance, heritage professionals underline cultural, heritage, scientific, and educational values of public art collections, however, these collections also must be evaluated in terms of monetary value when it comes to financial reporting purposes (Ferri et al., 2021).

In the case of art crime, the *financial* value seems to be emphasised more often than not. Phillips (2016, p. 217) argues that the mass media has two main ways in which it focuses on art: a “scandalous controversy” and/or “a luxury good”. In the media, titles like “Gentleman thief poses as art lover before stealing £40,000 statue” (Evans, 2015) or “American Authorities Have Returned 10 Looted Antiquities Worth a Combined \$1.2 Million Back to India” (Kinsella, 2020) are not uncommon. However, media outlets are not the only ones using financial values to create an effect. The emphasis on the monetary value also has been used by people in the heritage sector, as Durney (2013, p. 221) argues that the monetary value is used “heavily (. . .) in order to impress upon the public the scope of the problem as well as to generate support” for the protection of cultural heritage. Similarly, the financial values are used to address art-related financial crimes. In Europe, the fifth Anti-Money Laundering Directive<sup>2</sup> targets money laundering in the art market. Article 1 (c) brought into the scope of the new directive art traders in cases where the value of the transaction or a series of linked transactions amounts to 10,000 EUR or more. When such values are involved, traders must undertake customer due diligence by verifying the identity of the customer, obtaining the information on the source of funds and by examining the purpose of all transactions.

By focusing mostly on high value objects, we overlook a section of art market that potentially functions in a different way than the high value one. The engagements with objects and structure of the low-value market can look very different than perhaps the high value art market where only best of the best, or described as such, is

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<sup>1</sup>In this chapter, ‘financial values’ are used interchangeably with ‘price’.

<sup>2</sup>Directive (EU) 2018/843 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 amending Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, and amending Directives 2009/138/EC and 2013/36/EU.

being sold for high prices. This major area of the art market goes largely unmonitored, admittedly not helped by the lack of funding for law enforcement agencies and their ability to fund this type of work (see Brodie et al., 2019), and there is a significant number of actions taking place that involve smaller quantities or financial values that still affect our cultural heritage.

To emphasise the above point and counter the narrative that every art crime is ‘all about the money’, this research will discuss data gathered during a snapshot analysis of Russian treasure hunting forums. This is used to look at low-end collecting of archaeological objects. This research does not imply that all archaeological objects discussed here were collected by treasure hunters who broke the law, nor does it suggest that the forums surveyed and its participants, have been involved in illicit trade. It also does not argue against treasure hunting hobbies. It advocates for a more nuanced view when it comes to low-value archaeological objects.<sup>3</sup> We might define them as low (financial) value antiquities and instead choose to turn our intention to high value antiquities, but that would be a mistake considering the high volume of these smaller, lower value objects. Brodie (2017) argues that the Internet market can be highly damaging based on the number of objects traded when compared to the traditional, smaller physical market. The theories, policies, and outreach activities cannot hope to be successful if they exclude these alternative engagement spaces, and interactions with low-value objects.

## 2 Russia and Treasure Hunting

This research focuses on Russia for a number of reasons. Despite the large amount of people who allegedly participate in treasure hunting in the region (see Zubacheva, 2017), Russia is nearly absent from research on the global antiquities trade and Russia, and post-Soviet countries, have lacked a more in-depth focus in criminology (see Slade & Light, 2015). This is changing now with, for example, research done by Hardy (2016) who has carried out quantitative research on metal detecting in Eastern Europe but there is still a lot to explore about this region.

To provide a brief legal context, Russian Federal Law of 23rd of July 2013 (N245-FZ,<sup>4</sup> as amended on 28 December 2017) introduced into the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation several changes. It introduced article 243.2 “Illegal search and (or) removal of archaeological objects from the places of occurrence” which

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<sup>3</sup>The term ‘archaeological objects’ was used here as that is the term used in the Russian Federal Law. However, the term ‘antiquities’ will also be used as it is more commonly used term when talking about the trade. Here ‘antiquities’ and ‘archaeological objects’ will be used interchangeably without a reference to the object’s age.

<sup>4</sup>Федеральный закон от 23 июля 2013 г. N 245-ФЗ “О внесении изменений в отдельные законодательные акты Российской Федерации в части пресечения незаконной деятельности в области археологии” [“On Amendments to Certain Legislative Acts of the Russian Federation Concerning the Suppression of Illegal Activities in the Field of Archaeology”].

among other things specifies that the use of special technical means with a goal to find archaeological objects is allowed only when carrying out an archaeological fieldwork. In this law, the special technical means are understood to mean metal detectors, radars, magnetic devices, and any other equipment that could determine the presence of archaeological objects. In order to carry out archaeological fieldwork, an individual must apply for a permit, and to get it they must meet very strict requirements making it challenging to receive it. Search or removal of archaeological objects resulting in damage or destruction of a cultural layer without a permit is punishable. In this law, a cultural layer is defined as a layer in the earth or in the water that has preserved traces of human life which are more than a 100 years old. As such, the law protects objects which are found in a cultural layer that are older than 100 years old. This law also added to administrative offenses the illegal circulation of archaeological objects. However, certain objects such as weapons which are under 100 years old are governed by other laws such as article 222 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation.

### 3 Snapshot Analysis

The snapshot analysis was carried out as part of a European Commission-funded study into the illicit trade in cultural goods (Brodie et al., 2019). It is a cross-sectional analysis—in this case it is an analysis of objects offered on a specific website over a certain time period. Cross-sectional analysis has been used by several studies in the past to observe trade in specific objects and/or to observe trade on a specific marketplace. For instance, Brodie (2014) used a sampling methodology to conduct a study of the Internet market in pre-Columbian antiquities over a 3-year period (2011–2013) and establish baseline estimates for the volume of the trade. Elkins (2008) tracked listings on the ‘Ancient Coins’ section on the United States eBay site and concluded that this market in “undocumented coins” in the United States and Canada alone is “a multi-million-dollar industry” (Elkins, 2008, p. 4). As such a snapshot analysis is a useful tool to gain an overview of what is happening in a subset of the antiquities market during a specific period, for example, to record what type of objects are available on a particular platform and observe possible correlations that could then be explored by a further research.

This snapshot analysis focused on treasure hunting forums to get an insight into the Russian metal detecting<sup>5</sup> hobby. The usefulness of forums for data gathering has been noted in many studies related to as varied topics as sentiment analysis to better understand propaganda dissemination (Abbasi et al., 2007), e-crime market

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<sup>5</sup>Metal detectors as they are known today originated in the setting of WWII where they were essential for locating land mines (Stine & Shumate, 2015), however soon after WWII metal detecting was picked up as a recreational hobby (Thomas & Stone, 2009)—looking both for valuables such as lost jewellery and archaeological objects.

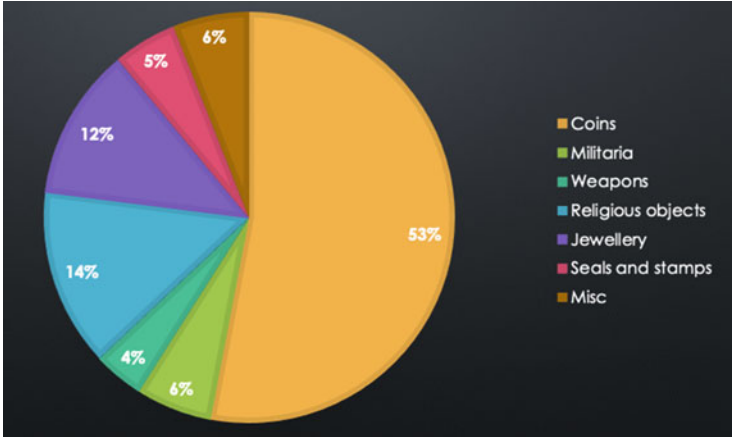
(Motoyama et al., 2011), and social psychological research (Holtz et al., 2012). When it comes to research related to archaeological objects, metal detecting forums give us a chance to see the types of objects that have been found recently, the prices they are being sold for, and the number of objects offered. Additionally, in some cases we can find out what happens to these objects such as they are being added to personal collections or sold to a fellow forum user. The goal of the snapshot was to get a glimpse into types of objects that are being found by metal detectorists in Russia.

## 4 Main Observations

An Internet search was conducted to find relevant forums. This involved looking for treasure hunting forums and finds with metal detectors. Multiple forums were identified but it was decided to focus on one main one and two smaller ones, one of these was just a single subsection dedicated to metal detecting finds on a forum dedicated to various electric equipment. The majority of the analysed posts (122) came from a forum that seems to be the largest online forum of treasure hunters who metal detect as a hobby in Russia; in November 2020 it had almost 89,000 registered users. Only open, publicly available posts were analysed. The snapshot focused on metal objects, more specifically, the items which looked like they could have been found by a metal detector. As the posts were analysed manually and the allocated time to carry out the data gathering was limited, it was decided to focus on a 3-day time span. A 3-day time span was chosen to ensure that all subpages of the selected forums could be analysed as certain sections such as numismatics had a large number of posts therefore if longer time span would have been chosen it had a potential to skew the number of object categories that were analysed. All told, 127 publicly available posts were analysed, which were posted in the time span of first to third July 2018. The majority of the posts described just a single object however few of them listed multiple objects (e.g., two posts described finding large hoards of coins consisting of 600 and 7199 coins respectively). The posts were in Russian and the sites analysed had a Russian domain name.

As one would expect when carrying out a study of online social media platforms, this study comes with some limitations. Some posts on these forums were locked for unregistered users. As this study only looked at posts that were available for anyone to look at, it potentially can have an error in the number of finds per object category. However, it is believed that it provided a good estimate of the variety of categories (see Fig. 1 for object categories).

As mentioned at the start, although high-value archaeological objects make the headlines in popular media and some view them as “the hottest investment” (Baugh, 2007), a large proportion of the trafficked antiquities are in fact small, low-value objects such as coins and figurines (Alder & Polk, 2002; Elkins, 2008). Small metal objects are usually located with the assistance of a metal detector, at times in violation of the law (Elkins, 2008; Valdés, 2015). This pattern was also evident



**Fig. 1** Object categories by percentage

during the snapshot analysis. The archaeological objects appearing on these treasure hunting forums were small, low-value objects. However, the volume of these objects is high as the Internet in general has contributed to the shift towards low-value, high-volume antiquities (Brodie, 2017). As a way of example, the numismatics section on one of the forums in July 2018 had 3987 pages. There were 19–30 pages per post, which potentially amounts to an estimated 75,000 finds. In January 2021 the number of pages in that one section had increased to 4746.

#### **4.1** *Estimated Financial Value of Finds*

One hundred and five of the 127 posts were users looking for evaluations or gauging interest whether anyone would be interested in a particular object. Sixty-six of these were given evaluations at the time of the snapshot (see Fig. 2). From these 66 posts, 11 objects were moved to the auction part of the forum, while seven objects were described as for sale but did not indicate how they were being sold. From 66 evaluations provided by forum users, 52 objects were evaluated as being worth less than 2500 rubles (€28).<sup>6</sup> This, in combination with the potential amount of finds as discussed earlier, conforms to an idea expressed by Brodie (2015, p.11) that the Internet market makes it “financially viable to trade in low-value and potentially high-volume material”.

Although one can speculate about the cumulative financial value of the objects on these forums, there is a need to move beyond financial values as will be discussed later. However, as a brief example, we could consider a hypothetical scenario, where

<sup>6</sup>Conversion rate used 1 RUB = 0.0112324 EUR as on 3 June 2021.

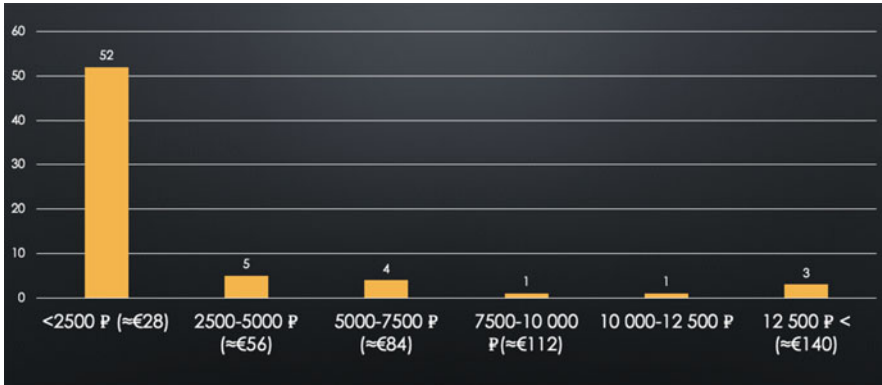


Fig. 2 The number of finds by the estimated value

a person has decided to look for archaeological objects without a permit using a metal detector. If we crudely summarise a rational choice perspective in criminology, crime will be committed if the benefits outweigh the costs (see Gül, 2009 for a summary on the use of the rational choice theories in criminology). In the case of Russia, the previously mentioned law (N245-FZ) sets out the financial penalty for the unauthorised search and/or removal of archaeological objects from the places of occurrence using the metal detector as high as one million rubles (over €11,000). If we consider that the majority of finds are worth less than €28, it is unlikely that the financial values are the main motivators for metal detectorists to break the law. Of course, this example is just hypothetical, and one could argue that in a large country such as Russia law enforcement agencies would struggle to enforce the law. However, it seems unlikely that someone would spend a considerable amount of money, time, and other resources to look for something that financially is not worth a lot if they were primarily driven by money. Metal detectorists argue that they spend a lot of financial resources on the hobby while the return is not as high, for instance, in the Heritage Journal’s discussion section (Swift, 2012), one metal detectorist, with the username Andrew, claimed that he has been metal detecting for over 40 years and has spent over £100,000 on the hobby.

Regarding the evaluations, the object financial values were estimates rather than the actual price the objects were sold for. However, some evaluations were confirmed to be accurate. For example, a 10 rubles coin was evaluated by forum users to be worth 22,000 rubles (≈ €247), a same type of coin was found to be sold for that price earlier, but with other evaluations it is impossible to tell due to the shortness of the time span that this snapshot analysis used.

## 4.2 Quality of Finds

An interesting point to note is the varied quality of finds. The online marketplaces have created a phenomenon called ‘the vacuum cleaner effect’—antiquities which



previously had very little material value are being sold to an ever-growing audience (Hollowell-Zimmer, 2003). This is something that Brodie (2017) has talked about as well—that archaeological objects sold on the Internet are generally of poorer quality than you would usually see in auction houses or dealerships. This ‘vacuum cleaner effect’ is evident in this snapshot analysis of Russian metal detecting forums. A portion of the finds posted were of quite poor quality but there were still people interested in them. For instance, in one of the posts on the forum, the finder of a heavily corroded bayonet knife of a Mauser 98k asked whether anyone would be interested in the knife in the current state of corrosion, and they were told that there would be people interested in buying it to restore it. Similarly, a heavily corroded, almost fully illegible coin from 1756 was evaluated to be worth 200–300 rubles (€2.24–3.36), a small amount but not nothing.

Of course, not all finds were of low quality, other finds such as a 1 ruble coin from 1724, or a ring potentially from the sixteenth or seventeenth century, were found in good quality or were cleaned up before being posted for evaluation. This also potentially suggests a different skill level of the finder, but it is something one could only speculate about. One thing is clear the quality of finds covers a wide spectrum rather than having a consistency and good standard of quality.

## 5 Engagement with Low-Value Objects

In criminology, research tends to focus on social aspects of the crime, and it has been argued that “criminal conduct is predominantly a social behaviour” (Warr, 2002, p. 3). As such trafficking research also tends to focus on social and criminal networks. While drug trafficking and human trafficking have been widely researched from a criminological perspective, antiquities trafficking, especially low-end antiquities trafficking has been less so. Furthermore, what is generally missing from this research is the role that objects potentially play in these networks. Objects are largely viewed as passive, and as accumulating increased financial value as they exchange hands. However, while objects accumulate financial value, they also accumulate histories. Kopytoff (1986) suggests the idea that one can write a biography about an object, the same way as one would write a biography about a person. These object biographies then can reveal relationships between people and objects, and how meaning and values are accumulated and transformed (Gosden & Marshall, 1999). While this approach has been taken up and explored in archaeological research (e.g., Marshall & Gosden, 1999), this is not a widely explored perspective in criminological research. Even cultural criminology which gives a chance to research crime in terms of “subcultural behaviour (...) organised around networks of symbol, ritual, and shared meaning” (Ferrell, 1999, p. 403), has been criticised for being “extraordinarily anthropocentric” (Schuilenburg et al., 2018, p. 268) and “privileg[ing] human experience” (Natali & McClanahan, 2017, p. 201), and as such if non-human actors are mentioned then their role is passive and instrumental.

The data discussed here is just a single snapshot coming from a region that could be argued to be on the fringe of art crime research. However, even this small dataset encourages more questions about engagements with low-value objects that move beyond anthropocentric view. Considering the number of finds, low-values, and sometimes poor quality of objects, it is hard to simply characterise this part of an art market as being purely profit-driven. Although it might not quite confirm to the idea of luxurious art market, it is still a part of it, a part that often falls outside our theorisation attempts.

Focus on only high-value objects and financial values has a number of drawbacks. On a theoretical level, objects are viewed in a passive way, as things with a price tag ascribed by people. On a public outreach level, focus on financial values excludes the range of motivations and beliefs for engaging with archaeological objects, therefore, making outreach activities potentially less successful and alienating some groups.

### ***5.1 Are Objects Just Vessels for Financial Value?***

There are many observations made in different contexts where illegal removal of objects from archaeological sites or looting has taken place or increased due to financial motivations such as economic downturn, war, or poverty (Gill, 2013; Parcak et al., 2016; Yahya, 2008). Similarly, studies have shown that in large scale trafficking networks, participants in the first stage of this activity, i.e., involving theft, might be willing to participate if presented with a profitable opportunity (Campbell, 2013). Additionally, it could be hard to entertain the idea that certain cases might be more than just about the money, especially when the financial value of the object increases at every stage of its journey.<sup>7</sup> All of these activities could be considered to be under the umbrella of art crime. However, the focus on financial values creates a very specific clear-cut image of what art crime is. Certain themes such as idea of the gentleman art thief or huge financial values emphasised in the media, reduce art crime to being purely profit-driven which alienates and distances art crime from day-to-day life. Values shape and inform policy decisions (Avrami et al., 2000). By over-emphasising certain values such as financial value, policy is shaped in a way that can exclude certain motivations, actions, and beliefs. The danger of emphasising one value over another or over-simplifying issue at hand has been noted before. Ellwood and Greenwood (2016) have hypothesised that heritage valuation in terms of economic value might alter the perceived cultural value of it, while EmBree and Scott (2015) argue that if we distance ourselves from

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<sup>7</sup>This was the case with Dancing Shiva Statue, which was sold by Subhash Kapoor, New York based art dealer, to National Gallery of Australia for US\$5 million. In comparison, Kapoor paid the local dealer at the source only US\$30,000, while the thieves who stole the statue from the temple received even less (see Boland, 2019 for more details on the case).

the notion that art crime is driven by only profit, we can better understand subtleties in art forgery.

What we can see from the snapshot analysis is that, yes, there are many posts gauging interest or asking for an object's evaluation (to be more precise, 105 out of 127), however, that is just one aspect of the relationships between people and objects. Appadurai (1986) suggests that a commodity is a thing in a particular situation, this situation can be applicable to any object at different stages of its life. Kopytoff (1986, p. 73) argues that commoditisation should be viewed as "a process of becoming rather than as an all-or-none state of being". As such it could be argued that commodities have social lives the same way humans do (Appadurai, 1986; Kopytoff, 1986). At the commodity stage of an object the most important feature of it is its exchangeability (Appadurai, 1986). During the snapshot, this is the stage that we can observe in majority of cases, however, by focusing on just this part of it, and on materialistic values, we overlook the other side of these relationships.

As mentioned earlier, the quality of finds covers a wide spectrum, so for instance the finder of a bayonet knife of a Mauser 98k was told that someone would still buy it and restore it even though it was in a heavily eroded state, so the object's life would continue. What makes someone buy an object in such a poor state? On the flip side, what makes someone keep a find that is in such a bad state? Why not discard it? In this situation it is hard to argue that it is all about the money, if a potential financial gain is less than €28. By reducing these relationships between humans and objects to only one aspect (in majority of cases to financial motivations or greed), we are shutting off potential avenues for further research, including research that would grant objects a degree of agency in the low-end antiquities trade. This idea might at first seem absurd, but this perception lies in "the Western opposition between 'objects' and 'subjects'" (Jones & Boivin, 2010, p. 334).

I am not suggesting that, by having agency, an object physically makes us do something, but following Latour (2005, p. 71) it is possible to extend an agency to anything that "modifies a state of affairs by making a difference". In this snapshot analysis, for instance, some objects were put on the forum, but they were not for sale even though they were described as rare and as such could be more financially valuable. One such object was an oxidised lead Berdan or Minié bullet which was decided to be kept as a souvenir as it is rare for the region where it was found. Arguably an object made a difference—it modified a state of affairs and influenced a more rational decision that would be to sell it as it is rare, but instead it was kept.

Even in the cases involving high financial value objects, monetary value is not always the most important one. For instance, in an interview, Jean Paul Barbier-Mueller, the Swiss collector and museum founder, stated that he is happy after he has completed a collection for it to be sold and find a new owner. As he put it "It is not a question of price, I do not need money, it is a question of how you will treat it, how you will show it" (Barbier-Mueller, as cited by Moore, 2017). In the interview, he stated that he works "in the shadows" so that "the unknown people" who created objects that he owns are connected to the people who come to see them, and he hopes that "that these encounters will be a revelation—and in the dark the authors of these works are smiling in silence and probably happy to see that the objects that they did

not make as works of art are important” (Barbier-Mueller, as cited by Moore, 2017). Similarly, Lawrence Fleischman, a gallery owner, art dealer, and collector, argued that when you start adding “a price tag” to your collection, “you dilute that experience” of engaging with the works of art (Fleischman, 1994). Both Barbier-Mueller (see Ruiz Romero, 2020) and Fleischman (see Watson & Todeschini, 2007) have been accused of buying and/or selling illicit antiquities, but we can begin to question if their motivation to do so was purely financial.

What both the snapshot analysis and the above interview excerpts show is that an engagement with the objects is more than just about money. As mentioned earlier, there are instances of art crime when it is motivated by economic gains, however, there is a spectrum of other engagements that are not all about the financial gains, and where objects are not passive things with a price tag. What would happen if we moved away from this notion of an object being passive? The answer to this question could have important implications for how we attempt to regulate antiquities buyer behaviour. It is something that further research could and should explore.

## 5.2 *Burning or Building Bridges: Greed or Love for History?*

The commodification of cultural heritage<sup>8</sup> in many instances is criticised, and this focus on financial value is used as a key divider that separates ‘good’ treasure hunters from the ‘bad’. For instance, the motivation of metal detectorists seems to be an important consideration when deciding who is worthy of official collaboration with professional archaeologists. Stine and Shumate (2015, p. 291) emphasise that those “avocationalists who do not dig in order to buy or sell artifacts can serve as important partners in historic-site archaeology projects”. However, this makes the issue rather clear-cut. As mentioned earlier, commoditisation is just a phase in an object’s life, a phase that object can move in and out of. By focusing just on this stage, when the exchangeability and financial value of the object is the most important, we dismiss relationships and values before and after it. We take a human-centred approach, where the sale of the object is the most important act, not the object itself. The focus on social and criminal networks, or more generally networks just involving people, has not brought the desired results to reduce antiquities looting at source (e.g., Mackenzie, 2013; Yates, 2014). This would suggest that different approach is required.

Animosity between metal detectorists and archaeologists has been discussed elsewhere (e.g., Karl, 2016; Lecroere, 2016), however it is worth mentioning that realistically speaking, even just based on the snapshot discussed here, there are a lot more of treasure hunters who engage with archaeological objects than there are archaeologists. There is a need for finding a way where these human-objects

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<sup>8</sup>By that it is meant that the cultural heritage is viewed primarily in terms of its financial, exchange value and transformed into commodities that can be bought and sold.

relationships can be explored. As this snapshot shows, these engagements with low-value archaeological objects are happening and are happening at quite a large scale. It is hard to justify these engagements as being purely profit-driven, so what is it then about engaging with these objects, that make people sometimes commit a crime? What is the nature of the influence and pull these objects have that make people spend time, resources, and effort to look for them, care for them, and sometimes cross the line and break the law? The case discussed here cannot answer these questions, but it hints at more complicated, intertwined values that are more than just about money.

## 6 Conclusion and Further Research

The snapshot discussed in this chapter can be viewed as a gateway into an alternative engagement space, a space where relationships between humans and objects are created, reinforced, and changed. This snapshot analysis covered only a 3-day period; however, it showed the high number of low-value objects that are available on treasure hunting forums. This was seen as a hint that low-end treasure hunting and collecting is more than just about money. Qualitative, in-depth research is required that explores these relationships with low-value objects. These relationships, focusing on objects, have a potential to reveal more effective points of intervention that could be applied to the illegal antiquities trade. A single archaeological object might not seem like a big deal or worth mentioning but if everyone removed these our cultural heritage would be quickly depleted. We can focus on large financial values, but it is the persistence of smaller activities that over time can cause a significant damage. The question is, what we can do to prevent this or change the nature of the damage? There is a need to acknowledge an alternative engagement spaces and interactions that have been discussed in this chapter. It is time to include things in our theorisation attempts. The heavily corroded bayonet knife of a Mauser 98k is not just a thing with a price tag, it had a story (or a life), before appearing on the forum, and it will have a life after. Whether its life contributes to creation of alternative frameworks of crime and influences a committal of crime is something that needs consideration.

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