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Marc Balcells Magrans

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CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL LOOTING: A CRIMINOLOGICAL
ANALYSIS OF ITALIAN TOMB ROBBERS

by

MARC BALCELLS MAGRANS

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Criminal Justice in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York

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Abstract

CONTEMPORARY ARCHAEOLOGICAL LOOTING: A CRIMINOLOGICAL
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by

Marc Balcells Magrans

Chair: Dr. Jana Arsovska

Looters (in Italian, *tombaroli*), whether underground or underwater, have preyed on the Italian archaeology for centuries. The literature on both archaeological looting and, more specifically, the Italian case, has been widely developed by other disciplines, mostly archaeology. In spite of this body of literature, the number of studies discussing issues related to *tombaroli* is minimal, and the criminological contribution is nonexistent. After examining important gaps in the literature, this study explains the nature of the relationship between *tombaroli* and organized crime and how organized criminals learn and adapt during their careers. These topics have been both misrepresented and sporadically dealt with in the existing literature. Drawing on a multidisciplinary body of literature on Italian archaeological looting and interviews with looters, law enforcement officials, archeologists, prosecutors, journalists, criminologists, and authors, this study demonstrates that although Italian archaeological looting is a crime that is organized, it is not a problem of organized crime. In fact, its relationship to traditional Italian criminal organizations seems sporadic and anecdotal at best. Looting, an eminently group activity, is mostly perpetrated in teams, who perfectly fit the definition, albeit simply, of organizations. As such, *tombaroli* can learn as a whole group from the interactions among their members and adapt to the actions of law enforcement and other challenges. Through practice, *tombaroli* acquire and orally share a great deal of practical knowledge; this is different from the scientific knowledge of archaeologists.

Tombaroli change their ways of committing their crimes and learn new *modus operandi*, such as changing their timing when offending, adapting their work to rural areas, changing how they store and transport looted antiquities, and adopting new technologies. This study includes an historical analysis of Italian archaeological looting across centuries. This research project might interest law enforcement agencies, policymakers, archaeologists, NGOs, civil society and scholars. Because it offers in-depth insights about *tombaroli*, one of the most important risks archaeologists have to face in order to protect their future discoveries, it is expected that this study and its recommendations might potentially have significance in several fields such as archaeology, criminology, and policing.

To my father; to my mother; to Toni

We live on an island surrounded by a sea of ignorance. As our island of knowledge grows, so does the shore of our ignorance.

John Archibald Wheeler

PREFACE

I do not know the number of researchers that can pinpoint the moment their interest in researching a topic began. I do know, however, that my story begins with a journal article I was reading on a sunny July afternoon in Umbria, Italy while I was completing a certificate program in cultural heritage. In the article, Proulx (2011a) states:

Additionally, since the activity of looters and traffickers is necessarily furtive, such actors make difficult subjects to reach for interview about the social organization of their criminal endeavors. To date, few if any criminologists have been able to penetrate the underlying social dynamics of the illicit antiquities trade, making the collection of microlevel, contextual information on looting a challenge (p. 2).

From that day on, I fell in love with the understudied topic of Italy's *tombaroli*, and I set my goals deciphering, through criminology, as much as I could. *Tombarolo* (or in plural, *tombaroli*) is the Italian term that designates archaeological looters, which derives from the Italian word *tomba*, meaning tomb. It refers primarily to tomb robbers operating in Italy, although the term *clandestine*, translated as illegals, has also been used to describe them (Thomas, 2012).

I arrived without any knowledge to the field of cultural heritage crime through combining my degrees in law, criminology, and human sciences with my love for the classical world, its history and its art. That first summer in Italy I was able to roam its fields and archaeological sites and see firsthand the problems illicit diggings pose for archeologists. Since that summer of 2011, I have visited the country every summer and established a base of relationships with many people who are passionate about preserving Italy's cultural heritage.

Even as I write these lines today, I remain surprised by the amount of emails, calls, and connections needed to locate and speak with a *tombarolo*. Indeed, as readers will see in the introduction to this dissertation, researching populations align themselves on the supply side of the spectrum, such as drug producers or *tombaroli*, , can be daunting.

But knowledge about *tombaroli* is badly needed: Italy is, in the words of one of my interviewees, the land of the *gratta e vince*, the “scratch and win,” because buried under each layer of soil is an uncountable cultural heritage just waiting to be found. In fact, as I managed to observe during fieldwork, pieces were not as deeply buried, as many would imagine. *Tombaroli* know it, and that is exactly their *raison d’être*. Just read the following case, which illustrates precisely how tomb raiders have been pivotal co-conspirators in selling Italy’s past.

In 1980 in Arpi, in the region of Puglia, which forms the heel of the Italian peninsula, tomb raiders found a tomb later nicknamed by archaeologists the tomb of the Medusa. The *tombaroli*, using a bulldozer, found the frontal part of the tomb, which remained unearthed, and stole most of the valuables. They stole all the significant pieces that they found in this exceptional, third-century-BC tomb. It was so thoroughly emptied that the organization in charge of cataloguing it, the Italian ministry for cultural heritage, only found fragments which lacked archaeological relevance.

Furthermore, although the organ in charge of the site decided in 1989 to build a protective structure around the tomb, *tombaroli* have broken into the precinct many times, damaging the archaeological remnants (Graepler & Mazzei, 1996; Pastore, 2001) with brute force or imagination. They even managed to excavate a tunnel from a neighboring vineyard straight to the tomb. The most important pieces from this site were not found by archaeologists, but by police officers in the trunk of a car. The case of the tomb of the Medusa is illustrative of the phenomenon of archaeological looting.



FIGURE 1. An illegal excavation perpetrated by *tombaroli* at the necropolis of Cerveteri.
Source: the author (2017)

This research project is another step towards achieving a body of empirical knowledge in the field of cultural heritage crimes, and more specifically, on the broader topic of antiquities looting. As such, this doctoral dissertation uses a criminological approach to demystify the *tombaroli* by accurately depicting them and analyzing their specific role in looting Italy's archaeological heritage. This is different from the media's tendency to romanticize the tomb raiders. I only hope the project helps bringing some light to such an obscure field and contributes to bridging the gap between fact and fiction.

I am proud that I have been able to reach out to *tombaroli* and ask them about their criminal activities with the intention of analyzing their responses and obtaining scholarly knowledge from them devoid of the sensationalism that often impregnates the discourse of *tombaroli* in the media. Over the years of working on this project, it has become clear to me

that although researchers and *tombaroli* devote our time to very different projects, we both “dig” to uncover something. Skilled, old *tombaroli* will tell you that they do it to save antiquities from the darkness of Earth’s hidden confines. My justification? To boldly go where no criminologist has gone before, hoping that at the same time that this helps preserve our ancient cultural heritage . That is why I consider this research project as a metaphor for an excavation. After a proper introduction, a literature review and a section on the methods used, we will also uncover some results to analyze as if we were raiders entering a tomb that has been long hidden, awaiting our visit. I only hope you enjoy this experience as much as I have.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I could not be more thankful for what is probably the most memorable adventure I have ever been part of: quitting my job as a defense attorney, traveling to the USA, and embarking on a PhD which would eventually take me inside Etruscan tombs in the heart of Italy. During all these years I have surrounded myself with incredible human beings and institutions that have helped me, and this is my tiny tribute to all of them.

Special thanks to my family, my most special support: my father, Pepe, who passed away in 2008, and my biggest regret is that he could not make it to this party; my mother, Pepa, who has suffered the process of writing this dissertation as much as I have, and I hope I can repay her all her endurance with some well deserved mother-son quality time; my sisters Marta and Meritxell; their husbands, Albert and Santi; and my fabulous nephews: Gal·la, Pol, and Berta. Finally, this dissertation is dedicated also to Toni, my partner in crime and in music: his patience is infinite, and I could not be more thankful to life for the chance encounter that started it all.

More special thanks, this time to my dissertation committee: Drs. Jana Arsovska, Rosemary Barberet, and Roddrick Colvin. I thank you all for your support, and I can promise you that I will cherish your teachings and your wisdom forever. As Dr. Barberet says, onwards and upwards, I promise. And if you are still not fed up with me, I hope we will get to collaborate on other projects.

As it all began in Barcelona when I started studying Criminology, I would also like to thank some very important criminologists who still believe in me today: Drs. Elena Larrauri, Marcelo Aebi, Josep Maria Tamarit, and Josep Cid. They keep encouraging me to work in the best job ever invented: criminologist.

All of this could not have been possible if the Spanish branch of the Fulbright Commission had not deemed me worthy of a scholarship to pursue a PhD in New York City. They took me under their wing, and I can say today that I am a proud Fulbrighter, spreading their great work anywhere I can and engaging students of mine to follow my path. Thank you!

Thank you to everyone who accepted to be interviewed by me and had to put up with his or her beloved Italian language being dragged through the mud. Thank you for your time, your knowledge, your encouragement, the walks, the adventures, and the meals. Your warmth is endless and truly reflects why Italy is such a great country and has such a special place in my heart.

Thank you to all my colleagues in the field of cultural heritage crime that have helped and encouraged me: Drs. Edgar Tjihuis, Duncan Chappell, Saskia Hufnagel, Christos Tsirogiannis, Paula Lazrus, Peter Campbell of the Antiquities Coalition, and Cindy Ho from SAFE. And special thanks to the Association for Research into Crimes against Art for all their support: Lynda Albertson, Drs. Noah Charney, and Crispin Corrado. Thank you to those people who not only have cared about my dissertation but whose lives are devoted to protecting cultural heritage: I am very proud to be considered by you your colleague.

Some people outside this field have been key players in their support to this project. Many thanks to Drs. Gloria Garcia Romeral and Dr. Paul Marshall, who are miracle workers: I owe them so much! But if someone has glued this thing together by keeping me from dying literally of stress (or fear) it is Montse Voltes. Montse, I am sure I could never have done this without our sessions and your help. The world would be a better place if everyone had their own Montse Voltes to get the best out of them.

And last but not least, the best friends a guy can have by his side. I know I cannot name everyone who listened and encouraged me to keep going, because then this would be a

two-volume dissertation. But once again, I need to emphasize the patience and true friendship of some people who have helped me throughout this process. Playing for team Barcelona I present you some of my best friends: Manel Gastó, Xavi Gual, Pau Pérez, Sergi Zapatero, and the Marcs (Suárez and Matalonga); Lara Espallargas, Sílvia Izquierdo, Victoria Bonet; and (soon-to-be Dr.) Antonia Linde and Dr. Patricia Hernández, aka the *crimiteam*. They are my band of sisters and brothers, and I need an island big enough to fit them all there!

On the other side of the pond, in that tiny town called New York City, I also met amazing friends: Dr. Alexandra Hiropoulos, Greg Kearns, and a band of people whose paths were meant to cross: Maria González Picatoste, Andrea de Pascual, Beatriz Barral, Ana Conchán, the Danis (Duran and Triadó), and Dariel Arrechaga: long live our Mexican nights! And thank you to Marc Tió, my ex-roommate and best friend in NYC, and the whole universe. Thank you to all of you from the bottom of my heart! Who is on board for the next adventure? I promise I will not complain as much as I did this time (well, maybe a little)!

Marc Balcells

Barcelona

November 24, 2017

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CHAPTER 1

*IL FASCINO DELLA NOSTRA AVVENTURA:*¹

INTRODUCTION TO THE RESEARCH PROJECT

I grew aware of the plague of *tombaroli*, but even I had never imagined the clandestine trade dealt in such quantity-and quality. From what I could see, Crustumarium was just then being raped, as Cerveteri was raped in 1970s.

(Watson & Todeschini, 2007)

On September 13, 1995, a Swiss and Italian police joint operation raided the Freeport of the city of Geneva. This zone is a contested area when it comes to antiquities looting, as goods can be stored without being officially in Swiss territory; therefore, taxes do not need to be paid until a commercial transaction has been performed, the moment in which the good enters the country (Watson & Todeschini, 2006). Inside the warehouse the agents found many archaeological items which had clearly been raided, as they still had dirt attached to them. They also found, a collection of Polaroid photographs, invoices, shipping documents, among others, that proved the relationship between the dealer and his buyers. These would which would prove crucial to the prosecution of the warehouse owner, the art dealer Giacomo Medici. The totality of these documents proved that Medici had been conducting an illicit operation for decades.

Yet probably the investigation's most unusual finding was at the home of the then-deceased Pasquale Camera. Camera had written an organogram of the entire criminal structure, ranging from the lowest *tombaroli* to the top world museum and collectors in Europe and the United States. This chain linked *tombaroli*, middlemen, couriers, restorers,

¹ The enchantment of our adventure.

dealers, museums, collectors, and auction houses (Chappell & Polk, 2011; Watson & Todeschini, 2006). Because this dissertation focuses on the supply side of the illicit antiquities trade in Italy, its main characters are the *tombaroli*, the ones that anonymously appeared in the lowest levels of Pasquale Camera's organogram. But who are these *tombaroli*? What do they do? What is their history? This chapter will introduce the reader to this dissertation's object of study by answering these questions.

1. Archaeological looting and antiquities trafficking

Archaeological looting, as a criminal activity, is the threshold to other crimes within the cultural heritage sphere, such as antiquities trafficking, the infiltration of looted art into the legitimate market or laundering of antiquities within a market country before a final sale. "Looting" is here defined as a criminal action involving the illegal excavation of archaeological sites. The result, looted antiquities, are defined as those taken illicitly from the ground, or from their place as an integral part of, or attachment to, a temple or other ancient structure. There is a conceptual consensus that the term "antique" excludes all material that is less than one hundred years old (Mackenzie, 2005; Renfrew, 2000).

The trade in illicit antiquities has the greatest negative impact on archaeological sites, which are plundered so that the looted items can end up, mostly, in museums and private collections in rich countries. A primary impact of the demand for antiquities involves the destruction of major sites, especially when the plunder activities are large scale, rough, and devastating. Looting has a tremendous impact on ancient structures like temples or tombs, as it prevents the expert hands of an archaeologist from obtaining the items properly. As such, these structures are often reduced to ruins due to inexpert excavation systems. The need to hide the evidence of the act of looting itself, also unintentionally contributes to damaging the site (Brodie, 2002).

A second negative impact of looting is the destruction of archaeological context and the loss of historical information. Precisely because antiquities are the form of learning from ancient cultures long gone, the systematic study of context is, according to Renfrew (2000), essential. Bauer (2008) defines context as the physical space in which an artifact is discovered in relation to other artifacts and features in the earth. As such, when an archaeologist excavates a site, he or she documents the contextual information of where the object was found and in what position. Evidently, this systematic way of proceeding is not undertaken by looters, but rather erased. The result is that looted antiquities do not shed any light on our joint past: they may be aesthetically pleasing, but from an archaeological point of view, they are meaningless (Brodie, Doole & Watson, 2000; Chippindale, Gill, Salter & Hamilton, 2001; Gerstenblith, 2009, 2007; Renfrew, 2000).

A third negative consequence of looting is its direct impact on communities who suffer looting. Not only does looting deplete these communities of their heritage, but it also deprives them of an economic resource. A further indirect consequence is the corruption of officials handling permits or in charge of checking exit points (Brodie, Doole & Watson, 2000).

In recent decades, technological advances, such as bulldozers, mechanical diggers, dynamite, metal detectors, power saws and drills, among others, have enabled widespread looting. This improved technology has opened up areas which were previously out of reach for looters. The erosion of political barriers and cheaper traveling costs has also allowed for an easy access to the sites. These factors, combined with collectors who regard archaeological or ethnographical objects as works of art, investment assets, and/or fashionable decorations, help perpetuate this situation (Brodie, 2002).

The literature on archaeological looting and the illicit trade in antiquities concludes that the demand of rich countries is the catalyst of looting. Archaeologists believe that looted

objects obtain a patina of legitimacy and then become revered objects in museums or private collections, even though they have been illicitly excavated. The transformation is possible due to the fact that antiquities surface in the legal market even though a large percentage of them appear with no provenance whatsoever. In other words, the piece does not carry any information of where it was excavated, its circumstances, or who owned it privately before the last acquisition (Brodie, 2006; Chippindale & Gill, 2000; Elia, 2009; Gerstenblith, 2007).

As Brodie and Tubb (2002) state, the majority of antiquities, which lack demonstrable provenance, have been looted. On the other hand, dealers, auctioneers, collectors, and museum officials dispute these charges arguing that provenance can be lost in many ways other than looting, such as the passing of time, war, migration, indifference, or even chance finds (Ede, 1995, 1998; Mackenzie, 2005). Archaeologists blame this situation on dealers and final consumers. The former voluntarily neglect to investigate the legitimate provenance of a piece, and the latter's appetite for antiquities drives the market and fires the illicit trade. Through their collections they knowingly or unknowingly fund and underwrite networks of looters (Renfrew, 2000).

The trafficking of looted antiquities creates a so-called "grey market," which Mackenzie and Yates (2016) state that it is being caused by the mixed streams of supply of antiquities, the changing status of objects as they pass through trafficking networks, and the neutralization and greying of the moral psychological process of engagement by buyers of looted antiquities. In other words, white, licit antiquities mix with black, illicit antiquities to form a grey market, which flourishes because of the art market's tolerance of opaque business practices. This tendency is encouraged by the fact that both looted and legal antiquities both meet the consumers' need for them to look a certain way aesthetically when presented in the market (Alderman, 2012; Brodie, 2012; Mackenzie, 2011a; Mackenzie & Greene, 2009; Proulx, 2011a, 2011b; Visconti, 2015).

Source countries have their own problems when it comes to curbing looting and the subsequent antiquities trafficking. Most of these countries are low-, or lower-middle-income countries, which implies that even though looting is not an economically sustainable activity, it persists because it provides an income not only to individuals but also to communities (Politis, 2002). Further, the lack of economic resources also undermines the protection of archaeological sites. Even though these countries have naturalized antiquities by passing laws that make them property of the state, their law enforcement agencies systematically fail to enforce these laws. For most states, safeguarding archaeological heritage is not a high priority.

2. The problem of quantifying looting

Measuring the prevalence and incidence of particular crimes is always fraught with difficulties, and archaeological looting and the trafficking of illicit antiquities is not an exception. This form of illicit activity presents particular forms of measurement problems, when compared to other forms of crime. Clandestine excavations, the smuggling, and the private sale or the mix of the objects in the legitimate market are particularly significant stumbling blocks (Balcells, 2016; Mackenzie, 2011a). At present, we do not have a systematic approach to collecting criminal statistics that would allow an accurate analysis of looting (Brodie, Doole & Watson, 2000; Calvani, 2009).

To begin with, the illicit trade in cultural material is obviously clandestine. It is, in consequence, difficult to quantify the damage caused worldwide by illegal excavation, to estimate the size of the illicit market, or to assign value or structure to it. Further, as Conklin (1994) stated, looting involves two types of sites: on one hand, those that are well known to archaeologists as they have been excavated beforehand, and on the other, sites that

archaeologists have not yet discovered. In both instances, it is difficult to assess the extent of damage caused by looters.

There are very few facts and figures, and discussions often rely on anecdote and assertion. Arriving at reliable estimates is difficult given that conventional crime statistics generally obscure this type of offense. Recording practices for crimes against antiquities vary across jurisdictions, and often categorize these crimes thefts, thereby lumping them together with other property violations (Brodie, Doole & Watson, 2000; Mackenzie, 2011a). INTERPOL collects annual estimates which include thefts from archaeological sites. Yet once again, these numbers remain doubtful, as these crimes remain undetected or unreported, and these numbers are not publicly accessible; moreover, national statistics frequently disregard the type of object stolen, and only half of the organization's members respond to the questionnaire (Passas & Proulx, 2011).

In 1990, the Museums Association estimated the profits of the illicit antiquities trade at between \$225 million and \$3 billion per year. In 2000, the Organized Crime Group from the Metropolitan Police, in the United Kingdom, and Interpol estimated the profits of the illicit antiquities trade at between \$300 million and \$6 billion per year. And the European Association of Archaeologists estimated the profits of the illicit antiquities trade at around \$4.5 billion per year (Culture, Media and Sport Committee, 2000). However, the reliability of these figures is uncertain, as private sources tend to estimate (Gill & Chippindale, 2002).

Private initiatives to estimate the extent of the phenomenon have been more successful. Particular scholars and their studies have focused on assessing the extent of looting in source countries through archaeological field surveys and photographic records, giving us continuing evidence of this crime (Brodie, Doole & Renfrew, 2001; Coggins, 1969). For example, Chinese officials estimated that in one year (1989-1990) 40,000 tombs had been emptied (Anderson, 2002; Murphy, 1995; Platthy, 1993). By 2003, it was estimated

that an additional 220,000 tombs had been pillaged (Beech, 2003). Alva (2001) estimated a similar amount in Peru. Another source has been case studies of specific types of objects, which have suggested that high proportions of them have a doubtful origin.

A third and more recent attempt to assess the extent of looting uses auction catalogues and import and export records, an innovative method which increases the accuracy of the results: (Mackenzie, 2011a). Proulx (2011b) surveyed 2,350 archaeologists and concluded that 98% of the participants had suffered looting in some capacity where they were working. 68% of the participants personally encountered evidence of looting, and 24% witnessed looters working in their site. In short, as Bator (1982) stated, as long as there is a market for this kind of object, a substantial amount of looting will persist, no matter what policies are enacted.

In recent years, there has been an emergence of case studies which take account of regional differences in order to paint a more detailed picture of elements such as routes taken, criminals involved, and how their perpetrated crimes have evolved. A qualitative approach is needed to understand the dynamics of particular instances of cultural heritage crime in diverse geographical areas. The researcher must understand the processes by which events and actions take place, developing contextual understanding, facilitating interactivity between researcher and participants, adopting an interpretative status, and maintaining design flexibility.

Two examples of such regionally focused qualitative research in the field of cultural heritage crime are Huffer and Chappell's (2014) fieldwork to evaluate the illicit traffic of antiquities in Vietnam and Davis and Mackenzie and Davis' (2014) fieldwork to assess temple looting in Cambodia. The former involved unstructured interviews and short formal questionnaires among a pool of both Western and Vietnamese archaeologists, museologists, and government officials in Hanoi. One advantage of this research is that it triangulates data

sources, or, in other words, it uses several methods to measure the same phenomenon. In this particular case, the researchers not only used qualitative work but also quantitative, through the collection of surveys in order to figure out the spatial distribution of dealers, the end-market collectors or the prices' variations, among other issues (Huffer and Chappell, 2014). Davis and Mackenzie and Davis' (2014) fieldwork used as data interviews ranging from short conversations to oral history discussions in order to assess the looting inflicted by the Khmer Rouge in the period ranging from 1970 to 1998. These interviews all took place in temples in Cambodia. During a second phase of research, the authors conducted interviews in Bangkok with looters, traffickers, and dealers in order to track trafficking networks (Davis & Mackenzie, 2014; Mackenzie & Davis, 2014).

Recently, scholars have been supporting programs intended to research and map unknown archaeological sites through the use of technology, such as satellites and computer analysis of aerial images. For example, one piece of research used Google Earth imagery to investigate site looting in Jordan; the authors concluded that Google Earth is a tool well suited to the task (Contreras & Brodie, 2010a, 2010b; Kennedy & Bewley, 2009; Parcak, 2009).

In conclusion, data about archaeological looting reveal that the illicit trade in antiquities is highly lucrative. This is due, in part, to the fact that cultural heritage is a non-renewable resource, as the object keeps circulating openly in the art market for many years while generating money in transaction after transaction. Although this trade is lucrative for many, the community where the artifact was found is hurt, as looting severely undermines the community's economic base, not to mention that purchasing these pieces is not a humanitarian act (Brodie, Doole & Watson, 2000).

3. The problem of archaeological looting in Italy

The present research project focuses specifically on the Italian case concerning the looting of antiquities, as it is one of the most paradigmatic cases of source countries in the field of looted antiquities. Italy, a vast open-air museum and traditionally one of the most prolific countries for the art market, is, logically, exposed to several forms of attacks towards its cultural heritage. The typology of crimes is vast: commissioned thefts, fakes and forgeries, vandalism, or money laundering through the purchase of art, among others.

Looting mostly affects Italy's ancient heritage, the history of so many stable or nomadic tribes and civilizations. Because the traffic of looted antiquities relies on a country's richness in its cultural heritage, not all source countries are classified by the World Health Organization as low- or lower-middle-income. As Lazrus (2002) stated, Italy is a G7 country, and as a consequence, has a decent standard of living (see also Borodkin, 1995). As a consequence of Italian archaeological heritage being one of the richest in the world, clandestine excavations have been one of the greatest crime-related problems that afflict Italy (Nistri, 2008).



FIGURE 2. An illegal excavation perpetrated by *tombaroli* at the necropolis of Cerveteri.

Source: the author (2017)

Illicit excavations were initially deemed a small part of the more dangerous phenomenon of illicit trafficking of antiquities. The phenomenon has increased since the 1970s, alarming not only archaeologists, who are unable to control the situation, but also the institutions in charge of safeguarding Italy's cultural heritage.

The circuit of clandestine looting is complex and varies according to the geographical area affected. Tomb raiding is most intense in several of the well-known Greek and Etruscan provinces, such as, Sicily, Puglia, Sardinia, Etruria, Lazio, Basilicata and Campania. These regions abound in necropolises, like the one of Cerveteri, in the province of Lazio, near

Rome. The rich heritage of the old Caere, underneath Cerveteri, makes this archaeological site a preferred place for *tombaroli*. Important tomb raiders have worked here for centuries, and, of course, have earned the attention of Italian officials from both the Police and the Ministry of Culture. Archaeological sites like Cerveteri are being destroyed at an alarming rate (Silver, 2009).

Given the vast proportion of cultural heritage in Italy, the specific harm of illicit archaeological diggings comes from the tomb raiders' hastiness in retrieving the artifacts from the tombs and their complete disregard for preserving the archaeological context and the tomb and the goods within (Iannizzotto, 2006). As grave robbers' excavations are conducted in a hasty manner that neglects scientific methods, they are particularly destructive. As tomb raiders only prioritize the market value of the piece, they inevitably destroy the morphology of the site and make it difficult for scholars to interpret. The items found and removed without scientific criterion lose all the information that is derived primarily from the original context.

In some instances, the illegal excavation becomes particularly devastating. This occurs, for instance, when, instead of using their traditional techniques, such as the pin, spade and pickaxe, *tombaroli* use bulldozers or chainsaws to pull out the frescoes (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2008). Over the past century, *tombaroli* have destroyed all archaeological evidence of the Etruscan history (Silver, 2009). A relatively recent trend is to deliberately break the findings into pieces and release them onto the market in a controlled manner over time to increase sale value (Isman, 2009a).

4. An evolution of the *tombarolo* through the centuries

It has been stated that there is no criminological literature on the figure of the *tombarolo*. The only accounts available in the existing literature come from the field of archaeology,

journalistic accounts, official reports from Italian authorities, and a few autobiographies. Together, they form a fragmented picture of this phenomenon, filled with contradictions. However, by synthesizing the existing literature into a historiographical account, particular historical stages regarding the evolution of *tombaroli* can be found. Tracing the evolution of this collective sheds light on their contemporary activities.

4.1. *Tombaroli* in ancient times

There are accounts of the illicit activities of *tombaroli* since the Roman Empire, as Roman law already condemned this activity. The earliest traces of legislation against *tombaroli*, according to Hamblin (1970), are the laws passed in the times of Vespasian in the first century AD and Constantine in the fourth century AD. The term *tombaroli* was not yet created and looters were called “seekers” instead. These seekers turned their attention to the same objects that entice most of today’s *tombaroli*: Etruscan tombs. In fact, a study of seekers does not reveal many differences involving motives and goals between historical seekers and today’s Italian looters. In both cases, their primary concern was to obtain gold and other valuable pieces that were put in the more important tombs as a token of the nobility of the deceased.

Tagliaferri and Rupi Paci (1992) claim that in the zone of Vulci, one can trace the illicit diggings of Etruscan tombs to the second and first centuries BC. The authors even think that the Etruscans may themselves have raided the tombs of their predecessors. There is, however, no record of Romans raiding tombs dated beyond the 7th century, and it must be mentioned that Romans did not raid all the available tombs for one reason: they did not have the necessary means to find them. As such, Romans went straight to the visible tombs, the ones which, most of the time, had a visible marker.

According to Tagliaferri and Rupi Paci (1992), only these markers warned Roman looters that the tomb beneath was important, and therefore, worth raiding. In order to do so, seekers started digging, and once they reached the entrance of the tomb, they created a tiny hole no bigger than 40 cm in diameter and used children to get inside, who only had the task of taking the valuables, including gold, silver, and bronze. Curiously, the valuable ceramics or frescoes that nowadays constitute the core of the findings of *tombaroli* were discarded: usually, Romans tended to smash them against a corner of the tomb. Then, the grave was earthed again with the marker buried inside. In fact, Tagliaferri (1992) himself, as a noted *tombarolo*, has found many tombs that Romans had pillaged centuries before him. So, as the tomb raider indicates, it is possible that a tomb robbed by his gang had been entered three times over the centuries. However, an unopened tomb can be easily spotted when, logically, all objects are intact.

For centuries, farmers and shepherds would use both the tombs and Etruscan caves as shelters for themselves and their flocks or as deposits for harvests. Also floods, long before modern agricultural vehicles existed, had washed tombs away, leveling the lands and bringing out a lot of waste ceramic. As most field workers were indifferent about these fragments, urns and Etruscan vases were used as containers or troughs. But centuries later, everything would change.

4.2. Tombaroli in modern times

The next testimonies of tomb raiding, in the nineteenth century, did not come from *tombaroli* themselves but from travelers such as William Hamilton and George Dennis. This century marked the renaissance of archaeological looting, a phenomenon that continues today. These gentlemen visited the states that today make up unified Italy as important stops in the *grand tours*, or travels, that the nobility engaged in to educate themselves in the art and history of

continental Europe. Hamilton and Dennis gave first person accounts of the activities of the *tombaroli* (Dennis, 1848; Mead, 2007).

The first to be interested in Etruscan tombs beyond tomb robbers and farmers were, in modern times, scholars and antiquarians who began these activities for fun and love of the ancients, which led them to collect everything they could find. Things changed, however, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, when a real “grave fever” exploded in all its virulence. This was not very contagious, however, if judged by the historical facts. Those to be “infected” were almost exclusively rich aristocrats and large landowners, who essentially devoted themselves to excavations precisely because they were the ones who could afford to do so; the ones who sought to become more cultured; and also, because as landowners, they owned the estates which were beginning to become the important necropolises of today.

Nobles and aristocrats were not always erudite intellectuals, and yet they planned, organized and managed the predation of the archaeological riches of Italy. For nearly a century, they had the dubious right of exclusive excavation. The name of the most famous and documented landowner might sound familiar to the reader: Lucien Bonaparte, who eventually would be nicknamed “the Prince of grave robbers.” Lucien Bonaparte was the brother of emperor Napoleon Bonaparte, a man with a strong personality and a man of his time, the Enlightenment, as he was a politician, a minister, an ambassador, a writer, a poet, an archaeologist, and a lawyer.

Banned to Italy after quarrels with his brother due to a marriage, Lucien Bonaparte became, according to George Dennis’ (1848) *Cities and Cemeteries of Etruria*, a tomb raider in: the spring of 1828, when the vault of a tomb near the castle of Vulci collapsed under the weight of an ox, revealing the presence of a few ceramic fragments. Dennis (1848) documents how Bonaparte, in a few weeks, systematically sifted an area of about two hectares bringing to light more than two thousand artifacts.

Possibly (the sources are scarce) Bonaparte should be credited with the dubious merit of having sensed the cultural value and, above all, the economic potential of the still developing market in antiquities. Naturally, many of these artifacts ended up abroad, but this was not yet illegal. Bonaparte immediately showed a passion for painted vases. In fact, Dennis (1848) recalls Bonaparte ordering the superintendent who had assumed the direction of the excavations to recover even the smallest fragment. The recovered fragments were then cleverly recomposed and, if possible, integrated. The vessels so reconstituted then ended up on the market, especially in European cities where these items were highly valued.

This practice undoubtedly had a positive impact. It contributed to the restoration and preservation of a large amount of high-quality parts that would otherwise have been lost. Further, Bonaparte favored the training of a new class of craftsmen and pottery restorers, the same class that would later produce numerous fakes and imitations. However, Bonaparte was not driven by an interest in archaeological preservation. He decreed the destruction of crude pottery to raise prices by reducing the supply of antiquities.

Vulci, being one of the less sacked necropolises in ancient times, became a very important site to Bonaparte, until his death in 1840. His work on Vulci was deemed a success, given that he discovered important burial grounds such as the ones known as the Cuccumella and Cuccumelletta. However, Bonaparte missed the discovery of what is thought to be one of the most famous sites of all Etruria, the tomb François, discovered in 1857 on the property of the Torlonia family by the French archaeologist Alexandre François. Bonaparte has been labeled by history as a predator of graves, though other dealers and collectors follow his example today. Bonaparte's love for antiquities was genuine, and not surprisingly, he was the greatest collector of his time. Inadvertently, Bonaparte would be a key player that would boost this (yet to be) illicit trade into modern times, as will be seen.

After Bonaparte's death, the excavations were continued by none other than Bonaparte's widow, Alexandrina de Bleschamps, who witnesses such as Dennis (1848) describe ruling the sites with military precision with the goal of obtaining maximum profits from archaeological findings. When Dennis visited Vulci in 1842, Bonaparte had been dead for a couple of years, but the industry of the excavations was in its full swing, under the guidance of de Bleschamps.

Dennis witnessed Bonaparte's expeditious and brutal methods: a team of diggers working under the supervision of a thug armed with a rifle, ready to shoot in the unlikely event that some pieces were stolen. The tomb was opened and quickly scoured. Each painting fragment was collected and stored carefully in a basket, and the remaining pottery was systematically destroyed, after which the tomb was closed again and buried, and the workers passed to the next. An enlightened Dennis, struck by so much brutal insensitivity towards such ancient historical and artistic pieces, asked one of the directors of the work if he could have one of those valueless jars as a token. His request was denied, as de Bleschamps ordered that none of the findings were to be given to anyone, but especially jewels, which she loved to wear at formal dinners.



FIGURE 3. Discarded piece of pottery by *tombaroli* at the necropolis of Cerveteri.
Source: the author (2017)

Dennis also visited the castle of Musignano, home of the princess, where her son welcomed him (according to the traveler, he was also apparently involved in the family business), and where the assembly line of the industry of the excavations had its end. The house and garden were invaded by a large number of exhibits in bulk. Dennis could see the number of vessels ready to be exported and a restorer at work in the delicate task of reassembling the fragments. Similar scenes can be seen today in warehouses in the free ports of Switzerland, where dealers take advantage of the established tax system to store and sell their pieces. According to Dennis (1848), the excavations were carried out during breaks in the agricultural work.

Until today there has been no way to determine the number of raided tombs, which some estimates situate in the thousands. Most of the pieces found at Vulci that can be seen in

archaeological museums around the world were improperly excavated in the late seventeenth century and then passed on to other family members as heirlooms. This particular phenomenon would continue in the nineteenth century. As Rupi Paci (1992) states, every historical epoch has their tomb raiders. Before the Italian unification that began in 1815 and finished in 1871, the phenomenon kept happening. Although land ownership was altered after Italy's unification, this change did not affect the activity of *tombaroli* at all.

4.3. *Tombaroli* during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries

An important turning point during the twentieth century was Mussolini's 1939 law that made every archaeological find the property of the Italian state. The dictator realized the problem of looting, even though it furnished both international institutions and private collections (Iannizzotto, 2006). After that moment, looting tombs implied stealing property that belonged to the Italian state. In the period after World War II (1945-1970), local farmers cultivating the fields, known as *agricoltori del posto*, mostly looted tombs as a way of gaining a modest income to supplement their poor lifestyle, taking the occasional findings and hiding them while waiting for prospective buyers (Silver, 2009). Also, during quiet periods, the farmers prospected the terrain for likely places in which to dig (Hamblin, 1970).

However, over the decades that led to the 1970s, the activities of *tombaroli* gradually intensified. This period from approximately 1970 to 2005 is known as the grand archaeological raid, or *grande razzia*. From that particular time frame onwards, illicit excavations became a real industry. This was the most damaging period, as *tombaroli* became full-time looters and professionals (Graepler & Mazzei, 1996). Within the supply side, *tombaroli* were the first step in a long chain that involved middlemen, seasoned professionals in the rules of the black market, and, as such, the reference for sale and export abroad.

Middlemen know the rules of the market, and as such they are able to guess the most favorable economic moments before entering the pieces into commercialization.

The next stage concerned the marketing of the piece, a sale organized through local representatives, who collected the product until the traffickers took it abroad. In Italy not all the smugglers have access to the international market. In fact, only a few are able to enter this third stage of activity, as it requires access to financial resources and international contacts. The last part of the supply chain involved art dealers, individual collectors, and experts in foreign markets who are usually the receivers of stolen property (Nistri, 2011). Pastore (2001) added the involuntary and inadvertent aid of archaeologists: archaeologists may assist this trade by offering their expertise to art traders and private collectors, which increases the market value of these items. Archaeologists may also acquire ancient works of art on behalf of a museum or university collections without asking for their documents of origin, and they may also create a pedigree for objects of unknown provenance, enabling these piece to acquire a new and legitimate status.

Finally, the looted antiquities would pass from the hands of *tombaroli* to those of fences and traffickers, the two groups which represented the highest segment of this illicit industry. According to the Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale (2008), these subjects are particularly well-educated and well-placed in both the national and international art market. They have contacts with similar criminal figures abroad, an operational network in strategic cities and nations for the art market, with branches also in other continents. After creating false certifications of legitimacy, these intermediaries used to sell the stolen goods, following the trends and preferences of the art market and adapting to its demands.

Isman (2009a) has pointed to several factors that led to the steep rise of the *tombaroli* during the third phase. These include the weakness of the laws (for example, slow judicial processes, difficulty noticing the *notitia criminis*, difficulty proving the crime, or low

sanctions, among others) that make it unlikely that a *tombarolo* will be sentenced to prison, the weakness of the public protection of cultural heritage in Italy, budgetary issues, and the difficulty of controlling the territory by the Italian police forces. Regarding this last point, Silver (2009) states how “It was no wonder that the Italian police didn’t have the time or resources to crack down on every tomb raider or smuggler” (p. 103). The majority of archaeological objects on the market come from areas where professional illicit excavators have been proven to operate (Isman, 2009a).

Watson and Todeschini (2007), in their investigations, noted that some *tombaroli* received regular salaries rather than being paid only for their discoveries. Pastore (2001) states how

Illicit excavations... have now increased to such levels as to become a major problem, not only for archaeology but also for those institutions responsible for its safeguard. In fact, during the last few years, looting... has grown to such an extent that archaeologists are not able to control the situation (p. 155).

Another radical change from the previous phase involved the use of more aggressive, mechanical instruments, such as probes, canisters, hoes, electric saws, and spades (Pastore, 2001). *Tombaroli*, according to Nistri (2011), work in groups and use heavy machinery. They set up local collection centers that are controlled by one or more individuals, who in turn report to a local collector.

What happened to *tombaroli* after the great raid? Who are the *tombaroli* that have been interviewed in this research project? The great raid is over but the phenomenon, albeit mutated, still persists. Nowadays, most of the looters work in groups by themselves, without being part of a larger trafficking spectrum, and the looter-client relationship is more hidden

(and thus safer), now that the major players have been identified and the demand has been severely targeted. The transactions are local, from Italian looters to Italian clients. Clients are less important than the big museums and international collectors of the past, but they still make the action of looters possible, which means more sites keep being damaged (Isman, 2009a).

Tombaroli still heavily loot certain geographical areas of Italy, but without doubt, the conditions that enabled the great raid have ended. While there still likely remain a large amount of unexcavated archaeological items, there is no longer space for complex chains of subjects with specialized roles from supply to demand (De Rita, 2009). Yet who knows whether there will be another great raid in the future?

5. The difficulties of curbing looting in Italy

In Italy there are five police forces: Polizia di Stato, Arma dei Carabinieri, Guardia di Finanza, Polizia Penitenziaria and Corpo Forestale dello Stato, even though the last two only operate in the field of corrections and forests, respectively. The Minister of the Interior coordinates all of them (Polizia di Stato, 2013). The two forces that are mostly involved in preventing and detecting archaeological looting are the Carabinieri and the Financial Police (Guardia di Finanza), as both law enforcement agencies have special divisions devoted to safeguarding cultural heritage (Iannizzotto, 2000, 2006; Rush and Benedettini Millington, 2015).

The general rule is that archaeological research is reserved only for the Ministry of Culture, which can choose to make a concession on sites to third parties. Random discoveries must be communicated to the Ministry in no less than twenty-four hours, and the finder retains a portion that can reach half of the value of the discovery. When it comes to exportations of archaeological items, once again, the State needs to give permission. The rest

of cases are all under the domain of criminal law, with the exception, due to the application of the principle of retroactivity, of findings before 1902.

In accordance with Italian criminal law, anybody who takes possession of any archaeological material in a clandestine excavation site can be charged with the relevant crime, and therefore be punished according to the regulation on the protection of cultural artifacts according to Art. 176 of Decree No. 42/2004. Purchasers of these items can be charged with the reception of stolen goods (Art. 648 of the Italian Penal Code) or the acquisition of objects of uncertain provenance (Art. 712 of the Italian Penal Code).

However, Iannizzotto (2006), Isman (2009a) and Pastore (2001) point out that weak legislation has perpetuated this activity. Specifically, Isman (2009a) refers to several factors contributing to the survival of this form of crime. To begin with, the punishment is too light compared to other forms of trafficking prohibited by the Italian criminal code. The author here refers to the so-called *pene editali*, or low punishments, as the new legislation does not consider aggravating circumstances. Also, the entire judicial process is so slow that sometimes prescription becomes an advantage for the accused. The difficulty of determining the *notitia criminis* (when and where the crime happened), and, therefore of linking the crime to an accused, makes proving the crime practically impossible.

Prosecutors in this field like Paolo Giorgio Ferri (2014) claim that the law often complicates their task. For decades courts were not prepared to deal with archaeological looting, due to its specificity and exceptionality, but criminals rapidly adapt to this form of crime. The lack of communication between all the actors within the Italian criminal justice system makes their task more difficult. As a result, *tombaroli* rarely end up in prison. Iannizzotto (2000; 2006) has studied the application of the famous law Bottai of 1939 (law number 1089/1939) and determined that in its 65 years of history only 5,000 sentences have addressed the topic.

Despite their efforts, law enforcement agencies will always have limited control over Italy's rural areas, according to Isman (2009a). Nistri, interviewed by Isman (2009a), states how even though police efforts have increased, they still faced key limitations. Police normally perform controls periodically, using helicopters, cars, horses, and walking. According to the Carabinieri, officials frequently patrol the *tombaroli's* favorite spots, but patrolling entire fields all the time is virtually impossible. As Nistri claims, *tombaroli* are at home in the fields.

A final factor stated by Isman (2009a) is the weakness of the Italian state to protect the country's cultural heritage. To begin with, just as the police have been unable to protect archaeological sites in a country like Italy, so has the Ministry of Culture. Isman claims that because Italian museums were mostly closed to the public, safeguarding Italy's cultural heritage was a low priority for the public..

These factors impact on the tutelage of cultural heritage, as citizens believe that the job of safeguarding archaeological areas belongs merely to the relevant institutions, a belief that generates a culture of impunity according to Iannizzotto (2006). The same author links the lack of interest of public opinion in the poor legislative techniques provided to curb this phenomenon.

In conclusion, archaeological looting is a serious problem for Italy. As Isman (2009a) puts it, it is a red thread that ties together all the characters in play. These objects are excavated by non-professional hands from *tombaroli*, to middlemen, to the big traffickers who are distributed over different geographical areas; and then onto famous international art dealers, until they reach the museums and private collections. This trade has obviously contributed to the boom of the art market in the last thirty years. Italy, unwillingly, has contributed to this phenomenon with incredible archaeological pieces that by law belong to the Italian state and to the Italian people, as they make up its cultural heritage.

6. The prevalence of looting in Italy

The illicit excavation of Italian archaeological sites is an offense that is difficult to quantify, as law enforcement cannot know exactly what and how many works are looted annually. The Italian criminal justice system has a rough idea of the numerous recoveries that are carried out by the police, but these discoveries represent only the tip of the iceberg. The phenomenon is far reaching, given that many looted artifacts have been commissioned or acquired both on Italian soil and in foreign countries by wealthy collectors, auction houses, and museums that are particularly receptive to Italian goods of dubious origin.

As early as 1962 a survey of a single Etruscan cemetery showed that 400 out of 550 tombs had been looted since the end of World War II (Lerici, 1962). Between 1970 and 1996 the Italian police recovered more than 300,000 antiquities from clandestine excavations. These, however, are thought to be only a portion of the total (Isman, 2009a). This author estimates that 80% of all Roman and Etruscan pieces have a clandestine provenance, and that in the last forty years, 800,000 items have been found. The fact that clandestine excavations of sites is not a crime which is easily quantified, as it is impossible to pinpoint the exact number or relics or the procedure employed to remove them is the cause of unreliable data.

However, a general idea of the estimates can be reached through the official statistics recorded by the Carabinieri and other Italian law enforcement agencies. According to all of them, official data reports a gradual decrease in the number of clandestine excavations that have been discovered. The numbers have dwindled from a peak of more than one thousand per year during the 1970s and 1980s, to 103 in 2008 (Nistri, 2011). Isman (2009a) thought that the level of tomb raiding in the necropolis of Cerveteri diminished in 2007 from eighteen tombs per night to one; today, far from being an international trade, *tombaroli* only devote themselves to local clients.

According to official statistics, the trend of illicit diggings has been diminishing for the last ten years, from 216 cases detected in 2006 to 58 in 2016 (as seen in the figure below), with occasional increases (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017). The 2008 report highlights a particularly major reduction in illicit diggings, a drop to 161 cases, or -76%; yet it also shows a slight but significant increase of counter activity in terms of both persons pursued before judicial authorities and of the variety of typologies of the crimes prosecuted (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2008; Manacorda, 2011).

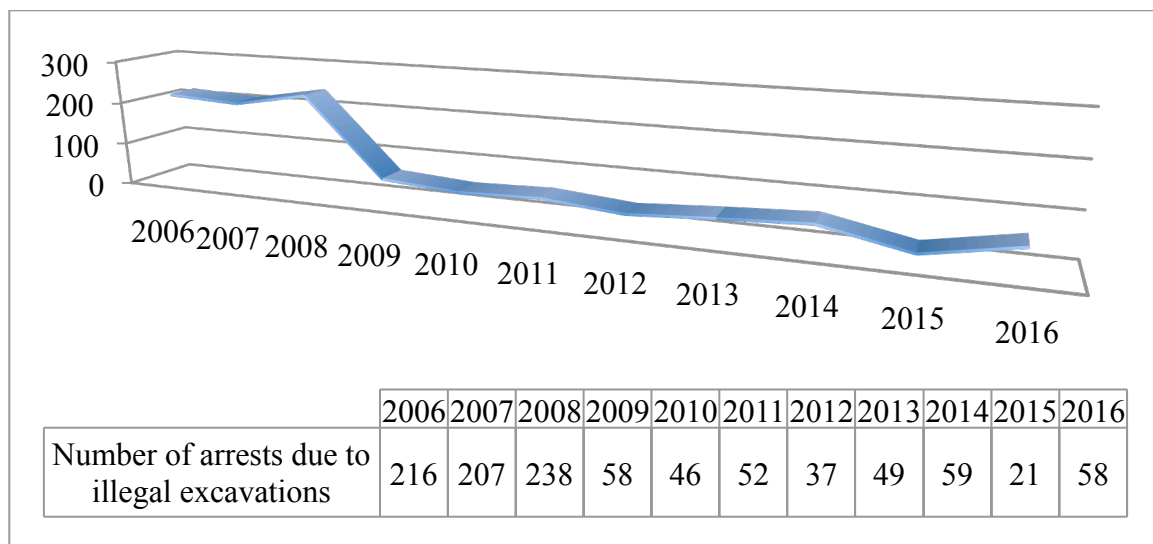


FIGURE 4. Illegal excavations detected in Italy from 2006 to 2016.

Source: the author, after Carabinieri (2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017)

However, there has been no single analysis of the motives for the decline in tomb raiding from 2006 to the present, beyond the report on criminal activity in 2011 by the Carabinieri (2012), which claims as a cause of the descent their new operational deployments in archaeological zones in half-year periods of controlling and monitoring with the aid of several public institutions.

There are several problems with this explanation of the decline. First, it has been stated how the extent of this illicit activity is difficult to measure. Second, the *tombaroli* still have the advantage of knowing the terrain well. Third, all agents engaged in stopping these crimes acknowledge there are archaeological zones still to be discovered. Finally, prosecutions are scarce and sentences are even scarcer. As such, extensively investigated *tombaroli* still keep operating. In sum, decline is real, but there are serious problems remaining despite the decline.

The most looted areas lie in Sicily and the region of Campania. There is a trend tending to privilege a national market for the looted antiquities; the illicit export of these items is reserved for only the most valuable goods. The most trafficked archaeological goods are sculptures, architectonic elements, and frescoes. In an interview with Isman (2009), Maurizio Fiorilli, a state attorney, states that 80% of Etruscan and Roman items in the market have been looted.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that scholars outside the criminal justice system have produced unofficial data concerning looted antiquities in Italy. Elia (2001), referring to Apulian red-figured vases, stated how it is clear that several thousands, even tens of thousands, of ancient tombs have been plundered to obtain the more than 13,600 vases that exist throughout the world and were recovered in a non-archaeological manner. David Gill and Christopher Chippindale (1993) wrote an article in the *American Journal of Archaeology* reporting on some classical collections and exhibitions and their catalogues. Investigating three auction houses' seasons both in New York and London (December 1994, May 1997, and July 1997), they tried to assess the proportion of antiquities being sold without a declared history recording where and when they were excavated and who the archaeologist was. The percentage of illicitly excavated antiquities ranges from 98 percent to 73 percent, depending on the researched period. They also examined five well-known collections and attempted to

trace every one of the 569 objects; they found that only 101 of them (18 percent) had a history.

Likewise, Lobay (2009), in a study devoted to assess archaeological looting in the center of Italy and the illicit export of these items to the United States, also used the catalogues of auction houses as data sources. The study investigated, on one hand, the area involving the provinces of Emilia Romagna, Le Marche, Lazio, Toscana, and Umbria; and on the other hand, the activity of auction houses in two timeframes: 1997 to 2000 and 2001 to 2005. These years were selected so as to empirically value the implementation of the bilateral agreement between Italy and the United States that limits the importation of particular cultural heritage goods to America. Departing from the hypotheses that, first, the treaty should reduce the dimensions of the market in illicit antiquities through a demand for greater information on the provenance of the piece, and second, an increase in the price of the items due to a limited availability of antiquities, the analysis of data concluded that the former hypothesis was accurate while the latter was not. Other researchers such as Beltrametti (2013), however, concluded that bilateral agreements achieved only some small results regarding the reduction of illicit exports of looted antiquities.

7. Purpose and plan of the dissertation

As seen in the previous sections, tomb raiding and the subsequent traffic of illicitly obtained antiquities is a real problem, with an alarming (albeit difficult to assess) prevalence. Existing research indicates the grave problem of mass destruction of archaeological sites in Italy by groups of *tombaroli* or looters of archaeological heritage. Beyond this destruction of archaeological sites, *tombaroli* also destroy archaeological scientific evidence (by removing it from the context where the item was found), information about provenance (the collecting history of the item), and contribute to a grey market in the illicit trafficking of these pieces.

The overall purpose of this dissertation is to understand contemporary Italian tomb raiding from a criminological perspective. This dissertation is both descriptive and exploratory as it investigates a subject that has been addressed mostly by archaeologists but has received no attention whatsoever by criminologists (it is therefore important to uncover this potentially important crime).

A qualitative angle and multi-data gathering techniques suit these two purposes (Kraska & Neumann, 2008). These exploratory and descriptive strategies are also justified not only for obtaining an assessment of the problem of archaeological looting in Italy (thus contributing to an existing body of literature on the topic) but also to allow further criminological research of the problem through the formulation of more precise questions that future studies can answer.

This chapter introduced the context, the problem that will be investigated, and the purpose of research. Chapter two provides a systematic, topic-specific literature review on the figure of the *tombarolo*, through the systematic identification, location, and analysis of multiple materials, including books, book chapters, articles, reviews, monographs, dissertations, research reports, and media from several countries and in several languages, in order to provide a clear and balanced picture of studied concepts, theories, and data, with the purpose of representing the sum of current knowledge on the subject. Chapter two also provides the theoretical framework used in this research project.

Chapter three presents the methods employed in this dissertation. As such, both the general and specific research questions, and the design and the collection of data will be explained. More precisely, the chapter will describe the rationale for the research approach, the research sample and the population from which it was drawn, the type of information needed in order to answer the research questions, the design of the study and the methods

used to gather data, ethical considerations, issues of trustworthiness, and limitations of the study and the attempts to address those.

Chapters four and five deal with the analysis of data and the reporting of findings on both research questions from the interview transcripts, documentary sources and derived qualitative comments, and field notes observations. Each chapter will synthesize all data sources and insights, turning them into an interpretation that is both holistic and integrated through the summation of all collected data in a dependable and accurate manner. These two chapters also deconstruct and interpret the findings, again, on both research questions, digging into the results in order to develop some understanding of them, examining deeper meanings and providing interpretative insights into the findings, and integrating them with the literature, research, and practice. Chapter six ends this project by drawing conclusions and presents actionable policy recommendations.

8. Conclusions

The case of Giacomo Medici and the organogram drawn by Pasquale Camera shown at the beginning of the chapter served to illustrate the severity and the magnitude of the problem of archaeological looting in Italy during the great raid, the moment when *tombatori* worked alongside dealers and traffickers to supply pieces worldwide to important, wealthy clients. Many years have passed since the Medici affaire, and the case is still deemed a milestone in the field, precisely because it illustrates so well several problems, including why archaeological knowledge is important, how looters prey on archaeological items, the problem of assessing the prevalence and incidence of looting, and how this particular crime affects Italy's cultural heritage.

The chapter also has explained how despite the end of the great raid, *tombatori* keep looting archaeological sites. More importantly, it has introduced the main figure that will be

researched, the *tombaroli*, which despite being dealt with in detail by other disciplines and the press, have not been empirically studied by criminologists. This chapter has also introduced the purpose and plan of the present dissertation. As this chapter has introduced the problem of archaeological looting in Italy, it is time to turn the attention towards what the literature states about the perpetrators of this crime: the *tombaroli*.

CHAPTER 2

*I SEGRETI DI UN TOMBAROLO:*²

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE ON *TOMBAROLI* AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE DISSERTATION

If we [archaeologists] do not protest when popular articles are written, illustrating someone wrapped in gold finds or suggesting where to go on a treasure hunt, then we silently condone these portrayals of our activities.

(Lazrus, 1995)

Even though nowadays there is a small repertoire of books and articles written by criminologists in the field of art/cultural property crime, empirical research still needs to be done across many parameters to document the magnitude, nature and impact of this form of crime. If chapter one introduced the reader to the broad topic of contemporary Italian tomb raiding, the purpose of the present chapter is to systematically review the available literature on *tombaroli* with the intention of assessing the extent to which existing research clarifies the criminal phenomenon of *tombaroli*; of identifying gaps and inconsistencies in the literature; and in the end, of describing directions for future research within this doctoral dissertation. In sync with the scope of the dissertation, the present systematic literature review refers solely to the Italian problem of archaeological looting, narrowing its focus on the figure of *tombaroli*.

² The secrets of a tomb raider.

1. Methods concerning the compilation of articles

A systematic review of literature on Italian looters has never been conducted beforehand, and thus this is the first of its kind. Objective, unbiased, and explicit inclusion and exclusion criteria for the acceptance of studies were established *a priori*. This step was intended not only to reduce the risk of bias but also to allow rapid reassessment should the rationale for exclusion of one or more studies be called into question. They also serve to ensure the quality and similarity of included studies and define the boundaries of the review (Crowther et al., 2010). Inclusion and exclusion criteria were based on common items such as the research topic, but also the definition of terms, participants, and time frame. As such, studies that met the inclusion criteria and missed the exclusion criteria were included.

In selecting which academic articles needed to be included in the present systematic literature review, the pieces had to meet the following criteria, which were applied to all titles, abstracts, and full manuscripts:

- Studies dealing with the topic of archaeological looting in Italy or studies dealing with looting on a global scale where Italy and *tombaroli* were used as an example. The justification of the present inclusive item is the fact that much of the literature based on looting of archaeological sites uses many examples of different geographical areas worldwide, although between them, these cases cannot be extrapolated. Therefore, the literature has centered on Italy and Italian looters;
- Studies dealing with the topic of *tombaroli* to a large degree. Many articles only use *tombaroli* sporadically and do not bring any new information on their activities. Therefore, articles that only mentioned *tombaroli* were discarded. Included articles had either to deal with the topic of *tombaroli* extensively and/or to describe their activities;

- Published or unpublished books, book chapters, journal articles, doctoral dissertations and master theses, government reports, and conference presentations that have been written in English, Italian, French, and Spanish. The justification for this inclusion criterion is the fact that due to the scarcity of existing literature, a wide net was cast to include serious articles in order to maximize and enrich the image of what has been written about *tombaroli*. Pieces of news that dealt with the topic but just brought a one-time and brief description of the case, editorials, front matters, opinions, book reviews, fictional accounts in novels, or blog posts, among others, were excluded for their lack of empirical value. A final motive for *post facto* exclusion were the few instances where either the book could not be found (the only instance being Carlo Lericci's [1962] *Italia Sepolta*, one of the first studies done on the level of destruction in Italian archaeological sites carried out in the early sixties of last century, yet unavailable at the moment of conducting the systematic literature review) or it was written in a language that complicated the assessment of both the sensitivity and specificity of the item (such as books that were written in German, which due to the lack of electronic support, the translation process could have been very complicated).

It is worth mentioning the usage of biographies of *tombaroli*, as a source. These are important sources provided one purges the justificatory and self-aggrandizing rhetoric or takes it into account and accepts it within the frame of reliability.

A systematic literature search was then performed to identify published and unpublished studies that have dealt with the topic of archaeological looting in Italy conducted by *tombaroli*. A careful planning of search terms helped locate as many potential relevant articles to be included: the most important search terms included were *tombarolo* and

tombaroli. Synonyms such as tomb raiding, tomb raider, looter, verbal forms such as looted, raided, a narrow term such as Italy and Italian, and toponyms (Sicily, Sicilian, Puglia, Apulian, among others) produced in all instances similar, if not the same, results, due to the lack of available literature. Also, wildcard symbols were used to stand-in for one character, which varied depending on the database. A strength of this literature review is that it has been conducted in several languages, mostly English and Italian, but also French and Spanish.

The search was conducted in multiple electronic bibliographic databases, clustered around transversal topics that could be relevant to the issue of tomb raiding in Italy. An exhaustive search included topics such as criminology and criminal justice (ProQuest Criminal Justice Database), political and social sciences (JSTOR, Scopus, Web of Science, ProQuest Political Science Database), law (JSTOR, Academic, HeinOnline), psychology (ProQuest Psychology Database) and human sciences with special reference to the arts and archaeology (JSTOR, ProQuest Periodicals Index Online). It must be noted that some of the electronic databases were transversal and covered a variety of fields, such as JSTOR or ProQuest Periodicals Index Online. The only database that was entirely excluded due to results was LexisNexis. Even though LexisNexis also has law articles, in the present case searches only produced pieces of news as results, which is an exclusion criterion.

The searches covered titles, abstracts and the full text of the articles. The following table shows the number of records identified through searches in the identification phase, where no quality check was performed at this stage. The resulting number of documents includes repetitions of the articles between search engines.

TABLE 1 Number of results per electronic database

Range of years covered by search: 1966-2015

Database	Number of resulting documents
Web of Science	4
Scopus	6
JSTOR	23
HeinOnline	55
ProQuest Criminal Justice Database	1
ProQuest Psychology Database	1
ProQuest Political Science Database	4
ProQuest Periodical Index Online	12
Total number of resulting documents	107

SOURCE: the author.

Finally, other methods related to the location of published work included reading the reference section of works suitable for inclusion and also consulting privately owned works, in order to locate both content related to *tombaroli* and references. This manual search produced twenty-two works.

In order to avoid publication bias, defined as the tendency for the availability of published research to depend on the results (Begg, 1994; Cooper, 2003; Rosenthal, 1979; Vevea & Woods, 2005), which poses an important threat to both the validity and the conclusions of the systematic literature review, the search also included unpublished work. The literature about methods has sometimes deemed unpublished research as works of lesser quality. However, it is now an accepted practice in rigorous systematic literature reviews to include both published and unpublished works (Cooper, 2003; Lipsey & Wilson, 2001).

With the goal of finding unpublished work, first, two researchers doing work on the issue of *tomboroli* (one of them a sociologist and archaeologist and the other an archaeologist) were contacted in order to locate their own work or forthcoming publications. There were no new results. The researchers could not point to relevant pieces that were not already included in the systematic literature review. Another method referred to locating “grey literature” (that is, literature produced in electronic or print format not controlled by commercial publishers, such as doctoral dissertations, working papers, conference proceedings, among others) was using databases such as WorldCat or Google Scholar, using the same search criteria as when searching for published works. The first produced forty-eight results, while the second was discarded due to the large amount (five hundred and sixty) of either repetitive entries or articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria.

At this point, it must be mentioned that in the balance between sensitivity, defined as finding as many articles as possible that may be relevant, and specificity, defined as making sure those articles are relevant, search terms erred on the side of sensitivity. After all the possible eligible items were located, a record keeping system was created. In order to do so, records of the results obtained were made by printing and filing them, where the excluded studies at the screening and eligibility stage and their reasons were marked.

Once the screening of articles was performed, the remaining studies were sifted in order to assess potentially eligible articles and extract relevant information to be included in the systematic literature review. The focus, at this point, moved from sensitivity to specificity. At this stage, instead of reading the title and the abstract of the work in question, full-text versions of potentially eligible articles were read to assess their suitability. As in the screening part of this process, the same recording system was maintained. When a work was identified for inclusion, relevant information was extracted and recorded in an Excel spreadsheet.

There were some studies that were labeled as “near misses,” also known as “borderline cases” (Trickley *et al.*, 2012). These studies can be defined as those which can almost equally be argued for inclusion or exclusion, and therefore require more of a subjective judgment call. In this specific research, three articles were deemed near misses: “Tales of a *tombarolo*” by Giovanni Lattanzi, published in *Archaeology*, in 1998; “My life as a *tombarolo*” by Cristina Ruiz, published in the *Art Newspaper* in 2000; and “Head found on Fifth Avenue: Investigators finally think they know who’s been taking the ancient treasures of Sicily” by Alexander Stille, published in *The New Yorker* in 1999.

These articles were deemed so because although the three were published in magazines, they bring a lot of insight into the topic of *tombaroli*, because they solely focus on them or because they manage to interview them. The studies, in the end, were included. This action is justified as these works had an illustrative value, demonstrated also when several authors have quoted them in academic articles listed in the database.

In conclusion, after progressing through the identification, both through the mentioned databases and the records identified through other sources; the removal of duplicates; and the screening in the eligibility phase, a total of forty-six articles were selected for inclusion into the database that makes up this systematic literature review. Annex A depicts graphically the process described in the present section.

2. Results of the systematic literature review about *tombaroli*

The following is a description of the forty-six relevant studies analyzed for the purpose of this project, based on criteria such as topic of the study, year of publication, language, country of origin of the article, type of study, field and purpose of research. The goal is to begin identifying gaps based on these shared characteristics.

The first result is that, out of the forty-six articles included, only sixteen predominantly focus on the figure of the *tombarolo*. The remaining articles research looting in Italy and only tangentially deal with *tombaroli*. Chronologically speaking, the interest in *tombaroli* began in the 1980s after some well-known looters began publishing books about their lives. It is in this period that we can see a trend of other articles being published by academics trying to assess this phenomenon. During the eighties studies on *tombaroli* took off. In the previous two decades (the 1960s and 70s) there was some mention of *tombaroli* in the literature, but their presence was still marginal. There were only four works, and none of them centered on the *tombarolo*.

In the present century we can observe this line of research picking up speed, as thirty-one works have been written after 2000. This increase was partially influenced by the importance the media gave to what they labeled “art crimes.” This created a synergy between studies on the topic and the presentation of the problem of archaeological looting and helped bring the activities of *tombaroli* to a larger audience. Regarding language, the results indicate that most of the literature is in English (thirty-three works), followed by Italian (thirteen). Regarding the country of origin of the article, Italy (with eighteen works) and the United States (with nineteen works) are the top two countries of production of literature on the topic. Other countries where the literature on *tombaroli* has found a niche are the United Kingdom (with five works) and countries within the European sphere such as Belgium, Hungary, Spain, and Canada (all of them with only one published piece).

Regarding the type of articles included in the literature review, most of the forty-six pieces take the form of a book (eighteen) or a journal article (sixteen). After these two categories, book chapters, conference presentations, and journalistic articles are the most common formats reporting on the *tombaroli*, followed by reports, dissertations, and encyclopedia entries (one each). These formats cover a variety of fields that have dealt with

the topic of Italian tomb raiders, but most come either from fields such as law (fifteen articles) or archaeology (nine). Other fields that have explained this phenomenon are anthropology (with two studies), criminology (three studies), sociology (two studies), and cultural heritage studies (one article).

Archaeology has been worried about the destructive phenomenon of looting and has studied it since Coggins published one of the first pieces in the field in 1969, *Illicit traffic of Pre-Columbian antiquities*, deemed a milestone in research about the illegal trade in cultural heritage. Consequently, the field of art law has been blooming since seminal pieces such as Bator's *The International Trade in Art*, published in 1981. However, within criminology, John Conklin's (1995) is a broad study dealing with all sorts of cultural heritage crime manifestations, whose sources are all journalistic, and Giovanni Pastore's (2001, 2011) articles on archaeological looting in Italy draws on the author's expertise as a colonel inside the Carabinieri. Accordingly, these two works have been included in the "Criminology" category as a proxy.

Most of the studies included are descriptive in nature (thirty-nine of them), as they paint a picture of the situation of archaeological looting in Italy and/or *tombaroli*. More methodologically complex research includes either exploratory research (whose primary purpose is to examine the phenomenon of looting in order to develop new ideas or move towards more refined research questions; five studies in total) or explanatory research (whose primary purpose is to explain why events occur and to build, elaborate, or test theory; two studies in total). Therefore, it is important to notice the preeminence of the description of the phenomenon. As stated, few of the studies analyzed included hypotheses or complex methods beyond the simple statement and discussion of facts regarding *tombaroli*.

Exploratory studies include Migliore's (1991) article, dealing with treasure hunting in Sicily, which concludes that audience views determine whether this activity is categorized as

“deviant.” The article of Thoren van Velzen (1996) evokes the image of *tombardoli* and how they present themselves, interpreting them in relation to responses from other members of the Tuscan population. The last two exploratory articles are by Fiona Rose-Greenland (2014a; 2014b); in both, the author investigates *tombardoli* from a sociological perspective, labeling them as a social construct, and concluding that tomb raiders are embedded in a system of shared cultural meaning and feeling. Explanatory studies include Peter Campbell’s (2013) article, where the author used a wide range of source material to chart interactions from source to market using an approach based on criminal networks, and Ippolito (2014), who examined the application of a human-agent based network to the Medici case, testing whether the dealer’s hierarchical pyramidal structure is accurate.

After both an in-depth read of the forty-six articles and cross tabulating some of the characteristics mentioned above in the formal description of the articles, some important topics emerged and some research gaps could be identified at first glance. The fact that some of the topics deal with and subsequently analyze the figure of the *tombardolo*, is more prevalent in particular topics. The first five topics (activities, motivations, justifications, trafficking, and relationship with organized crime) make the *tombardoli* in most instances the focus of their scope, whereas topics identified as “Prevention of looting,” “Archaeological issues,” and “Legal issues” only deal indirectly with *tombardoli*. In other words, the central scope of these articles was not looters *per se* but other issues derived from the situations they create. Therefore, even though all of the forty-six articles were treated equally when performing the analysis, emphasis was placed on the first group of articles, which are more relevant to the present research project.

After the analysis and the identification of topics, the identification of gaps also started emerging. In fact, cross-tabulating different descriptive elements of the articles (year, goals of research, used methods, among others) allowed for the gaps and inconsistencies to

clearly appear. Overall, there is a total lack of a criminological analysis. There is also an excess of description over more in-depth, analytical research stances. The articles perpetuate information coming from outdated sources and exploit sensationalistic and/or romanticized elements related to the lives of *tombaroli*. They further tend to lack research related to the supply side of the illicit antiquities trafficking spectrum, opposed to an excess of research on the demand side; and finally, the literature reveals a lack of communication between disciplines. These gaps will be discussed later in the chapter.

However, these flaws affect three particular topics that will be mentioned next: the relationship between traditional Italian organized crime and the *tombaroli*, how *tombaroli* organize themselves, and how *tombaroli* learn to loot. The topics have been presented in this specific order so a logical continuity between them can be perceived.

2.1. Organized crime and *tombaroli*

Only a few articles suggest that traditional Italian organized crime has a vested interest in the traffic of illicitly obtained antiquities in Italy (nine); many more articles neither deny nor allege any involvement between *tombaroli* and Italian organized crime (thirty-seven). The majority of the articles that do mention the involvement of organized crime target the south; most of them refer to links with the Sicilian Cosa Nostra.

These articles vary from alleging a clear involvement with the Italian mafia by, for instance, mentioning their presence when the tomb raiders are working, to indicating only partial cooperation, such as sharing the profits of trafficked archaeological goods, as stated by Thoden van Velzen (1991). Hamblin, an American journalist visiting Italy, gave an example of this clear involvement of the Italian mafia in the activities of *tombaroli* in 1970. The author, in her book on archaeological looting, talked about Sicilian organized criminals involved in tomb raiding:

From time to time the Mafia, that infamous Sicilian organization whose influence reaches even to certain underworld activities in the United States, has taken over the Selinunte dig as its own private domain. Mafiosi... did the diggings themselves, says a Sicilian, and since they controlled everything, including the police, they were able to dig even in the daytime. It was very funny, really. The men would be digging, and the head Mafioso was a sort of superintendent, watching them from a window, sometimes with field glasses (p. 87).

Similar accounts involving mafia-type organizations in the south are those of Alexander Stille (1998) or Giovanni Lattanzi (1999), who claimed that *tombaroli* could work during the day because they had the protection of organized crime; Hamblin (1970) also claimed they could work undisturbed. Other details of Stille's (1999) account complement those of Hamblin's (1970):

Cammaratta's role in the world of antiquities was so flamboyant and so widely known that the police in Catania wondered how it had escaped the notice of local authorities.... As the looting investigation proceeds, there are signs that the local underworld may be trying to intimidate the authorities (pp. 66-67).

In the north of Italy there is also an incipient activity. Northern *tombaroli* such as Luigi Perticarari (1986) denied the existence of an *onorata organizzazione* in the north of Italy, where he operated; yet he could not deny the involvement of organized crime in the south. In the same sense, *tombarolo* Antonio Induno, in an interview with Ruiz (2000), revealed that "...we are not like the Mafia; there is no violence but there is a code of

honour... it is a matter of loyalty. If I get messed around, then I'll make an anonymous call to the Carabinieri" (p. 4). Perticarari (1986), however, added that he had knowledge that in the region of Campania one had to pay an organized crime boss in order to be able to dig.

There are differences in opinions between people who work inside the criminal justice system and those who do not, yet differences of opinions sometimes appear even inside allegedly like-minded groups such as law enforcement agents, judges, or prosecutors. Melillo (2008), Deputy National Antimafia Prosecutor, argues that all of the traditional Italian criminal organizations have a vested interest in the illegal use of the archaeological sites located in the territories that they control and states that there is a relationship with Italian mafia-type organizations, mostly in the controlling of zones, facilitating related services, and laundering of the profits from other criminal activities via the underground trade of works of art and archaeological relics.

Iannizzotto (2006) takes a similar point of view in his work, by highlighting the undervalued and little known phenomenon of the vested interest of organized crime in cultural heritage. According to the author, all well-known Italian organized crime groups (he specifically refers to Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta, Camorra, and Sacra Corona Unita) have long participated in the illicit trafficking of works of art, as it requires a particularly complex structure. Pastore (2001), also a police officer within the Carabinieri as Iannizzotto, refers to the existence of criminal organizations and gangs which study and survey archaeological sites.

Nistri (2008), on the other hand, refers to networks whose task is to handle the numerous changes that take place from the time of the theft to the time the objects reach the final users. Nistri (2008), thus, is the only dissenting voice, when stating that

We should underline, at least as regards our own experience, that no proof has ever been found of an involvement of mafia-type organizations in the direct and continuing organization of the activities related to the traffic of cultural artifacts, despite the fact that investigations have often demonstrated a link between mafia organizations and the specific criminal sector regarding both the monitoring of the territory and the selection of objectives (pp. 97-98).

Luigi Lombardo, an Italian examining magistrate, however, confirms a clear involvement of Mafia-type organizations in the operations of tomb raiders, as confirmed by a case that occurred in 1996 where *tombaroli* were arrested alongside other Mafiosi (Stille, 1999):

Far more serious charges against Vincenzo Cammarata, however, arose out of a smuggling-conspiracy investigation that began in 1996, when police in Caltanissetta, the province adjoining Enna, arrested some suspected Mafia figures. Several of them turned out to be *tombaroli*, and they agreed to become state's witnesses.... (p. 66)

Several research gaps affect this specific topic. The most important one is probably the mounting contradictions surrounding a possible involvement of *tombaroli* with organized crime. Only nine articles out of forty-six reviewed mentioned some kind of involvement between organized crime and *tombaroli*; therefore, not many of them have observed this supposed relationship. As a result, it leaves us unable to determine whether the hypothesis of the involvement of organized crime as a supplier of illicit antiquities is true or false. While some components of the Italian criminal justice system talk about "archeomafia," others deny their involvement. And the fact that the literature uses terms like "gangs" and "squadrons"

interchangeably adds a further level of confusion to the issue in question. These contradictions in the literature do little to shed light on the research questions that guide this research project.

The lack of agreement regarding the relationship between *tombaroli* and organized crime is also perceptible in the broader debate about organized crime permeating the illicit antiquities trade. The question of what the level of involvement of organized crime in the illicit antiquities trade is has been marred by the paucity of comprehensive and reliable information on this sort of crimes (Proulx, 2010). However, the main problem has been the definition of organized crime (Alder & Polk, 2002, 2005; Chappell & Polk, 2011; Mackenzie, 2005, 2008, 2011b; Proulx, 2010; Tjihuis, 2006). Scholarly literature mostly states that the involvement of organized crime is not the prevalent dimension of this particular phenomenon (see, for example, Alderman, 2012; Chappell, 2011; Dietzler, 2013; Mackenzie, 2011c; Tjihuis, 2006; or Visconti, 2015).

This is not a debate that is only being discussed in academic circles, but also in government agencies, non-profits, and advocacy groups. Historically speaking, some scholars have criticized quick assumptions stating that organized crime has permeated the art market at least since the 1960s (Chappell & Polk, 2011). Ferri (2014) refers to how during the 1960s there was a shift in the trafficking of cultural property from single offenders towards organized crime groups; the internationalization of markets and the liberalization of the trade helped boost this particular change. However, most of the accounts that have claimed some kind of involvement have rarely been substantiated, leading to some voices within the literature to claim that this relationship between organized crime and the art market is, to say the least, spurious.

More specifically, there are important conceptual inconsistencies to be found in the literature. Some refer to organized crime broadly; others use the term “networks”; and still

others attribute the phenomenon to Cosa Nostra in Sicily. Beyond the important gap of inconsistencies surrounding this issue, it must be mentioned that cross tabulations permitted detecting other important issues. One of them was the lack of criminological analysis of the involvement of organized crime in the activities of *tombaroli* (the nine articles come from disciplines as varied as archaeology and law, but there are also journalistic accounts and one autobiography of a *tombarolo*).

All of the claims made in these articles are descriptive in nature, which by itself might not be a problem, were it not that some of these claims date back to the 1970s, and that none of the articles presents a methods section detailing how the information was acquired and results were produced. The most recent account, from archaeology, dates back to 2012. Finally, some of the accounts are highly sensationalistic (see, for example, Hamblin's quotation), a factor that needs to be taken fully into consideration. After all, out of the nine mentions, four of them come from outside academia, and no information about the employed content is made available.

2.2. Organization of groups of *tombaroli*

The structure of groups of *tombaroli*, which has an impact on both the conceptualization of what constitutes organized crime and how *tombaroli* learn as a group, is a topic rarely addressed in the reviewed articles. In twenty-one out of the forty-six articles there was some reference regarding how *tombaroli* organize. The descriptions, however, are highly simple. What can certainly be assessed is that, beyond some cases where it is stated that the tomb raider works alone, we find that literature depicts tomb raiding as a group activity. Out of the forty-six studies reviewed, only twenty articles refer to some kind of organization, while twenty-six omit this information. Again, like the involvement of organized crime with

tombaroli, the responses are varied and encompass a wide range of possible organizational outcomes.

Some *tombaroli* work by themselves. Curiously, the only two instances in the analyzed studies that address *tombaroli* working alone also cover the fact that they work with others as well. For example, one of these two instances is the account by Perticarari (1986), who states that,

Sometimes I go digging all by myself, yet with a team it is easier, as I only probe the soil (I can get to probe more than two-hundred times a night all by myself), whereas the others have to watch, dig and do all the heavy work... Nowadays, I often go all alone. It is a thing that nobody dares to do, as it is very dangerous. You need to do it all by yourself: probe the terrain, dig, and watch. Often the time to go comes and you have not even finished; you must leave and hide all the findings and hide the tomb. It is very exhausting (p. 35, 38).

As can be seen, illicit diggings are excruciating for just one *tombarolo* to perform. Thus, it is normal that most of the instances refer to a group activity, in very diverse forms; some refer to groups but do not refer to how many *tombaroli* integrate those groups. The literature also talks about groups formed by three to ten men, although some authors such as Stille (1999) talk about fifty. In his Sicilian account, he states how Silvio Raffiotta, a prosecutor in Enna, uncovered a network of more than fifty *tombaroli* operating throughout southern Italy, which could indicate looting on an industrial scale. However, Stille's (1999) account is clearly an outlier. Perticarari's description is more typical of the descriptions of *tombaroli* groups in the studied literature.

Other examples are the reports issued by Pastore (2001), who refers to gangs which study and survey archaeological sites, which was confirmed by a later report by Carabinieri (2008). Journalists like Watson and Todeschini (2006) refer to Armando Cenere, a well-known *tombarolo*, when they describe teams of at least six members. Eight members, between diggers and helpers, integrated the team of another *tombarolo*, Giuseppe Montrasto (Silver, 2009). Even archaeologists report that in the zone of Puglia, *tombaroli* operate in well organized bands (Graepler & Mazzei, 1996). It must be noted how a wide variety of terms are used to describe these groups, including “organized and fairly large enterprise,” “well-organized and specialized bands,” “illicit network,” “large gangs,” “tomb-robbing circles,” or “crews.” Watson and Todeschini (2006) summarize the police’s understanding of the *tombaroli* organizational structure as follows:

Long experience had taught the investigators what to look out for. At the lowest level, the *tombaroli*, or tomb robbers, are invariably laborers or farm workers, who don’t make many calls. Above them come those the *tombaroli* call the *capo zona*, the head of the region. The *tombaroli* normally sell their finds to the *capo zona*, frequently a man with a white-collar job, meaning he has some sort of education and whose telephone records as often as not show that he regularly makes calls abroad (p. 6).

Maybe the best insight into the domestic and international organization of *tombaroli* came from the so-called Medici conspiracy. Italian investigators located a handwritten note and an accompanying diagram listing by name the persons involved in this trade leading from the *tombaroli* to the middle men and art dealers, and ultimately to the museums and collectors in the United States and Europe. The following fragment describes the part of the

Medici diagram that shows the relationship between *tombaroli* and the *capo zona*, in the words of Peter Watson and Cecilia Todeschini (2006):

Below these were still more names, written in smaller letters. Below Becchina was Elia Borowsky, an M. Bruno of Lugano, Cerveteri and Torino, though with other words in brackets (“north Italy, Roma, Lazio, Campania, Puglia, Sardinia, Sicily”) – indicating his areas of competence. Below him was Dino Brunetti of Cerveteri, followed by Franco Luzzi of Ladispoli, a small town on the coast, just north of Rome, and below him the words “*Tombaroli di...*” and then a list of places including Grosseto, Montalto di Castro, Orvieto, Cerveteri, Casal di Principe and Marcenise. Also under Becchina was “Raffaelle Monticelli (Puglia, Calabria, Sicilia),” and under him Aldo Bellezza (“Foggia,” and elsewhere). Under Medici, dotted lines linked him to “Alessandro Anedda (Roma)” and Franco Luzzi (again), of Ladispoli, with a solid arrow linking him to “Elio-stab. of Santa Marinella” (“stab.” is short for *stabilimento*, meaning “factory”), “Benedetto d’Aniello, of Naples,” and “Pierluigi Manetti, of Rome” (p. 17).

Once again important problems can be found, some of them replicating the previously encountered topic that examined the relationship between organized crime and *tombaroli*. Out of the forty articles analyzing structural issues, three use a criminological angle. However, this statement must be treated with caution. Both of Pastore’s pieces have been labeled criminological as a proxy, as the author is a retired police officer; Conklin’s article is both dated and uses as data points pieces of news. Therefore, this is yet another topic that once again lacks proper criminological analysis. Also, the descriptive nature of most of the accounts does not provide further theoretical analysis. This is particularly important in a field

where the usage of terms such as “gang” or “network” can imply radically different realities. In this sense, we can find a similar confusion as to the one seen with organized crime.

Structure is one of the elements mentioned by most of the disciplines, although eight of the twenty articles are non-academic sources, such as news articles or biographies of a *tombarolo*. In these cases, one has to be aware of the source and the validity and reliability of the contents. More importantly, once again none of the articles present a methods section on how information was acquired and results were produced. Also, most articles do not possess a methods section. However, it can be estimated that the findings regarding the group nature of the *tombaroli*'s work are conclusive. As such, the hypothesis that looting is a group activity is correct, at least based on the present evidence. What is less conclusive is the extent of the participants in the groups. It would seem that groups vary heavily, although there may be an unknown variable (geographical zone, for example) that produces this and is not assessed in the pieces reviewed.

2.3. Learning processes of *tombaroli*

This systematic review of the literature also reveals limited knowledge about the learning processes of *tombaroli*, which is central to this study. Similarly to the previous two issues discussed, there is no article that refers specifically to the learning processes of *tombaroli*, which implies that only some articles indirectly address the topic of how *tombaroli* learn to perform their criminal actions. More precisely, only ten of them give the reader some insight into this question. A specific search was conducted to see whether the articles mention organizational learning or competitive adaptation; such an understudied topic has not been analyzed from these theoretical lenses. As will be seen, the learning processes vary from self-learning to family transmission of the knowledge of how to loot, as di Grazia summarizes (1970).

Some studies point out self-learning processes and continuous learning and practice to hone techniques. Luigi Perticarari (1986) explains how he learnt everything by himself, observing:

The first time I went probing, I went to Monterozzi, where the necropolis lies. I heard that with the probe you could find things, but nothing more. I did not know the technique. It was a disaster. I have learnt all by myself, stealing a word I heard here and there. And probing. And just like this, I came to know so many things. Someone will think it is impossible, but my experiences took me to find amazing discoveries. In the beginning, I only found opened tombs. Out of these I learnt the pathway to the entrance, the stairs, the front, the directions of them all. In sum, where the tomb was located. Therefore, it was not wasted time. Even the looted tombs gave me new information (p. 18).

On the other hand, the studied literature seems to point to some personal transmission, such as from father to son, or older *tombaroli* teaching newer generations. An example of the former is given by Greenland (2014b):

From Michele, a “former child *tombarolo*” who participated in unauthorized excavation with his father for more than a decade, I learned that unauthorized dig teams feature specialists who perform differentiated tasks in the course of the dig. In Michele’s experience, the strongest men handled the *spillone*, Michele’s father tossed down a rope, and the young Michele shimmied down the shaft. If the men agreed, on the basis of Michele’s report, that the tomb was worth digging out, the work

proceeded rapidly (to evade detection by police authorities) but also systematically (p. 214).

Marín-Aguilera (2012) gives an example of the latter when stating that “the oldest *tombaroli* teach new generations where, when and how to excavate following a real paudeutic model, based on fidelity and passion for the Etruscan past” (p. 573).

The content of what is being learnt is both, in the words of Thoden van Velzen (1991), “...experience and specialized knowledge to locate tombs” (p. 38). She adds, “Such knowledge is often passed on within a family. In one town the chief tomb robber has been a member of the same family for three generations in row. The rest of the community is perfectly aware” (p. 38). Some articles talk about learning skills such as exploring the territory, locating the entrance of the tomb, or opening them, although the process of learning these actions is not explained.

An example of this experience-based knowledge could be Perticarari’s above-mentioned trial-and-error learning process with the probe in order to locate tombs. However, *tombaroli* also acquire techniques from archaeology. For example, Ruiz (2000) states how Antonio Induno, a *tombarolo* who learnt the trade from his father and also from working for years as a henchman for another looter, takes a scientific, archaeological approach when opening a tomb:

“It makes no sense to come in from the top [of the tomb],” he says. “It is faster, but you break too many objects and what you break, you cannot sell. If you know how to break in properly, you can get a lot of stuff out of a tomb. I have years of experience; I know how to handle the works, how to retrieve them without damage” ... According to Mr. Induno, on average, a virgin tomb will yield some 30-40 vases as well as an

assortment of other artifacts ... Breaking into a tomb usually takes two nights. On the first, enough earth is cleared away to allow ventilation of the interior chamber. The tomb is left for 24 hours so that the burial goods inside, which may have lain buried for as long as 2,600 years, can oxidize and harden. “When I first started out in this business, many of the objects I handled crumbled to pieces. They were too fragile. Now, I have a more scientific approach,” says Mr. Induno (pp. 2-3).

This is not an isolated case in the literature: some other *tombaroli* claim to be passionate about archaeology. In an interview by Lattanzi (1998) of a *tombarolo*, he claims “I have never studied it [archaeology], not even in elementary school. When I was young, only the rich went to school, and I was poor. Over the years I have fallen in love with archaeology and have read many books” (p. 49).

It is important to remember, with respect to research gaps, that there is no article that refers specifically to the learning processes of *tombaroli*, which implies that only some articles indirectly address the topic of how *tombaroli* learn to perform their criminal actions. The most important concern here is that only four articles are academic, opposed to six non-academic pieces, with the corresponding problem this poses for their validity and reliability, already discussed in this analysis. The only exploratory article of the ten has no methods section beyond the author stating that the “... analysis draws on ethnographic data and textual analysis of newspaper articles concerning *tombaroli*” (p. 570).

3. Analysis of the extant literature about *tombaroli*

The results of this systematic literature review have shown relevant research gaps and inconsistencies. Highlighting these problems is essential, especially in a small field where

there is a lack of a considerable body of literature when compared to other criminological phenomena, where produced research is more abundant.

The first research gap to be highlighted is the lack of criminological research. It is true that Italy, as an important source country for antiquities, has had in-depth scholarly attention on looting, alongside other countries. However, even though it is true that tomb raiding in Italy has been studied, there are few accounts that use a criminological perspective. This problem has therefore been completely understudied from this particular point of view.

Proulx (2011a) confirms the trend toward non-criminological oriented literature in the field of illicit antiquities trafficking by stating that despite the importance of researching the criminal dynamics of this type of market, there is still little criminological research. There are not many criminological studies focusing on archaeological looting. In other words, all criminological research conducted until now focuses on the consumer's end of this form of trafficking. Therefore, it is evident that the literature fails to move beyond descriptive studies about the supply side of the problem, how antiquities are illicitly removed from archaeological sites by tomb raiders, and towards the production of empirical knowledge. This gap is due to the fact that there is only a handful of criminology scholars for whom the trade in illicit antiquities is a central interest. The topic of illicit traffic in antiquities is also well removed from the traditional core of interests within criminology.

Two more gaps are related to the fact that most of the literature surrounding the figure of the *tombarolo* is mostly descriptive and, in some instances, seriously outdated. These articles can help us have a view of the phenomenon but there is a need for understanding why certain things happen, beyond a mere description. Otherwise, a saturation of information on this issue can be noticed, mostly because recent descriptions of this phenomenon do not differ from older ones. As a result, unless new information appears that drastically changes the picture, it is safe to assume that no significant changes have happened since older accounts of

tombaroli were produced in the 1960s. Therefore, research has to balance this descriptive emphasis with more exploratory and explanatory pieces. Various theoretical frameworks drawn from different disciplines need to be applied to explain the “whys” and leave behind the “whens,” “whos,” and “hows.” An emphasis must also be put on promoting research based on evaluation, as none of the reviewed articles empirically analyzed policies and their effectiveness.

One of the most important problems lies in the fact that no methodology is provided about how the information was obtained or, more importantly, about threats to its validity, reliability, or generalizability. A reader cannot guess where information comes from, replicate the information, or assess its quality. These problems affect the consistency of the information, which *per se* is already very contradictory. In this review, where most of the empirical articles are descriptive in nature, many do not refer to criteria such as study design, selection of participants, methods of data collection, or methods of analysis, thus making the assessment of this extremely difficult.

As a result, some of the articles that have taken news as data points might have used some of the non-academic sources that tend to sensationalize, romanticize, or aggrandize the exploits of *tombaroli*: For example, pieces of news such as Caccuri’s (2012), entitled *Cosa cerca quest’uomo?* (What is this man looking for?), published in *Vanity Fair Italy*, provides a romanticized account of tomb raiding, denounced by some public officials and private citizens in Italy as an apology for looting. This action might unknowingly produce a snowball effect where particular descriptions might end up being replicated in other articles and accepted as a truth, perpetuating ideas that reader might find attractive but are far removed from reality.

Another flaw is that research has mainly focused on describing the final receivers of the illicitly obtained antiquities, and described how museums, dealers, and collectors

perpetuate this form of crime. However, in order to be able to assess the phenomenon of looting properly, it is important to know the role of the *tomboroli* as the starting point of the illicit antiquities trade. Literature that focuses on this transnational phenomenon has mainly focused on the demand side of this spectrum. As has been seen, there is no more than tangential information on the role of the *tomboroli* in this chain, beyond understanding that they are the ones finding the goods.

This pattern is repeated in other crimes, such as drug trafficking, where supplying drugs is labeled as “upper-level drug trafficking,” which would include, according to Natarajan (2011) the production; manufacturing and processing; shipment points, and satisfying the demand countries via smuggling of the drugs. According to Desroches (2007), there are several reasons for this lack of research: the highly covert and elusive nature of upper-level drug trafficking, the relatively small number of dealers at this level, the different geographical levels and transnational variations in drug dealing, and the permanently changing nature of drug markets. As a result, there are fewer than a dozen relevant studies worldwide that deal with upper-level drug distribution. These include research conducted in the U.S. (Adler, 1985; Hafley & Tewksbury, 1995; Natarajan & Belanger, 1998; Reuter & Haaga, 1989), Britain (Dorn, Lutz, & White, 1998; Dorn, Murji, & South, 1992; Pearson & Hobbs, 2001), the Netherlands (van Duyne, 1996; Zaitch, 2002a, 2002b), and Canada (Desroches, 2005).

Equally, we do not have criminological research on *tomboroli*. The reasons mentioned by Desroches (2007) could be applied in this instance to antiquities trafficking; yet, in this particular instance, the scenario is darker, as there is not a single piece of research within the discipline of criminology based upon this phenomenon. In this sense, *tomboroli*, as any other manifestation of art criminals, are still waiting for a serious criminological analysis in academia. Finally, these studies come from a variety of disciplines, which use different

methodologies. The problem for researchers interested in researching *tombaroli* is to build bridges and dialogue between the different disciplines involved. After reviewing the literature it can be seen how every discipline has moved in a different direction without harmonizing the results across the other disciplines.

After having assessed the gaps in the analyzed literature, this research project is essential because it is expected to provide a criminological perspective on the phenomenon of looting of archaeological heritage in Italy. This dissertation aims to shed light on two obscure areas: first, the level of involvement and interest of organized crime in this form of criminal activity and traffic; second, the gap in information regarding how *tombaroli* gain their knowledge.

Regarding the first obscure area, this research project will present the different perspectives on the categorization of this particular form of criminal activity as organized crime. In that sense, this dissertation will delineate the different ways of categorizing *tombaroli*, either as a phenomenon within organized crime or as just an independent criminal group activity, and propose alternatives within the existing literature related to this topic. Naturally, this has an important impact on the tailoring of policies at both the national and international level.

The dissertation will also discuss how the organizational methods of the *tombaroli* impact their learning techniques. An in-depth description of the structure of the *tombaroli*, one that goes beyond merely categorizing it as a “group activity,” can help develop policies to limit their activity. Similarly, lawmakers have tailored policies targeting other forms of crime (such as terrorists or drug traffickers) after the criminal population’s particular form of organization.

Above all, having identified important gaps in the literature about *tombaroli*, this dissertation seeks to ameliorate them. Beyond the use of an analytical criminological angle,

which expects to bring results that go further than a simple description of the current situation, the research project has a solid methodological foundation. Data collection, mostly based on interviews, is recent. Because the focus of this research project is the figure of the *tombarolo* (looters themselves have been interviewed), the criminological analysis provides insight into the supply side of the spectrum. Finally, it will try to assess in the upcoming chapters whether the collected information confirms or refutes the information highlighted in the present systematic literature review.

4. Theoretical framework and conceptual approach of the research project

The review and critique of the literature about *tombaroli* has contributed to developing a conceptual framework for the design and conduct of this dissertation. The conceptual focus developed for this research project shapes the research process, inform the methodological design, and influences the selection of data collection instruments. The conceptual framework also becomes the repository of the collected data, providing the basis for and informing the various iterations of the coding scheme. As such, this framework provides an organizing structure both for reporting this study's findings and for the analysis, interpretation, and synthesis of these findings.

4.1. Organized crime vs. crime that is organized

Defining organized crime is somewhat challenging given that it is a multi-angled and multi-faceted criminal phenomenon. This is an important problem at three different levels. At the legislative level, there is no consensus on what constitutes organized crime. As a result, definitions in various legal bodies differ considerably. Because law defines what constitutes a crime, the definitions in legal bodies must differentiate distinct behaviors and label them illicit. At the policy level, the problem of the inability of defining organized crime impacts

the allocation of resources, both in terms of finances and personnel. As such, both the perception of the public and of public officials will have an impact on resource allocation. Finally, at a research level, the scholars investigating this particular criminal phenomenon try to understand and explain it, with the further goal of possibly informing policy makers (Finckenauer, 2005).

Clear evidence pointing towards this problem is the more than two hundred scholarly and institutional definitions worldwide (Arsovska, 2014). In fact, Beare (2003) once ironically stated that there is a whole industry devoted to defining organized crime. Most of the time, note some researchers, we should be talking of descriptions rather than definitions of organized crime, as they do not delineate the boundaries of the phenomenon defined, thus only describing it (see Reuter, 1994; or Van Duyne, 2003). Therefore, no general definition has emerged (Abadinsky, 2010) even though Albanese (2011) talks about an emerging consensus. This consensus, however, given the above, must be disregarded.

After all, talking about organized crime involves referring to a multilayered social phenomenon, constructed in several ways and influenced by different factors. Von Lampe (2016) notes that even scholarly definitions of organized crime are either shaped by individual, political, and/or practical agendas and preferences. This trend is boosted by the fact that there is not one preeminent conception of organized crime that rules out external influences. Nor, on the other hand, is there a level of certainty on what the notion of organized crime is. At most, some of the definitions derive from particular empirical observations, thus having methodological problems of generalizability, or on a general agreement among observers.

Cressey (1969), considered as one of the “fathers” of the discipline, defined the concept of organized crime as a crime committed by someone who, in an established division of labor, occupies a position in order to commit crimes. He added that in this division of labor

there had to be a position for a person responsible for corrupting, a corrupter, and an enforcer. From this point of view, a plethora of definitions have emerged within the criminological community. Smith (1975) defined organized crime from an illicit enterprise point of view by applying organizational theory to this field. His economic approach put more weight on the criminal enterprises than on the individuals committing the crimes, thus undermining previous approaches with particular ethnical assumptions, specifically both the ethnic aspect inherent in the concept up to that date and subcultural dynamics (Finckenauer, 2005; Paoli, 2008). As such, it is historically relevant to recall the “alien conspiracy theory,” which, according to Smith (1974), referred to “... an alien, organized, conspiratorial force that, with evil intent and conspiratorial method, had forced its way on an innocent public” (p. 85).

It is also interesting to note the triple taxonomy of notions regarding the nature of organized crime that von Lampe (2016) proposes, distinguishing between descriptions based on activity, structure, and governance of organized crime. This taxonomy is useful to classify different definitions of organized crime, as these are centered mainly on one of the elements that form the division. In other words, some definitions center on organized crime being a specific type of criminal activity, whether due to the activity itself or the people involved in the task. These activities need to be organized precisely because of their level of complexity (see, for example, Porteus, 1998). Other definitions revolve around the element of organization, thus highlighting the above-mentioned trait that organized crime involves a plurality of individuals (see, for example, the definition issued by the FBI (2016), which defines organized crime as “any group having some manner of a formalized structure and whose primary objective is to obtain money through illegal activities”). Finally, a third cluster of definitions revolves around the concentration of illegitimate power, either by creating an underworld government or infiltrating legitimate governmental institutions (see, for example, Block, 1983).

The challenges of defining organized crime are also evident in two of the primary international definitional frameworks. The first is the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime, signed on December 2000, whose article 2 defines organized crime as “... a structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offenses established pursuant to this Convention, in order to obtain, directly, or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”

Arriving at a consensual definition proved to be, once again, quite a challenge. This Convention has been criticized for overlooking the arguments of a sector of scholars who claim that organized crime is local, not transnational; excluding, in its definition, elements deemed a cornerstone in organized crime, such as violence, or corruption; and positing a threshold of three members that must form the group (Arsovska, 2014; de la Corte Ibáñez & Giménez-Salinas Framis, 2010). In sum, it is deemed that the definition that the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crime provides is too broad and merely focused on the lowest common denominator (Finckenauer, 2005).

A year later, in 2001, the European Commission and EUROPOL, alongside the Council of Europe, operationalized the United Nations’ definition in order to ensure a more coherent response from the different European police forces and identify more easily this criminal phenomenon. Instead of a definition, these organisms proposed a list of factors that appear frequently in the best-known criminal organizations. Therefore, according to this list, an association of criminals only can be identified as a criminal organization when there is enough information to certify that all the mandatory criteria are fulfilled and at least two of the optional ones.

The mandatory criteria consist of the collaboration between more than two people; extending over a prolonged or indefinite period; the suspicion of committing serious criminal

offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty; and a central goal of profit and/or power. The optional criteria consist of a specialized division of labor; exercising measures of discipline and control; employing violence or other means of intimidation; employing commercial, business-like structures; participation in money laundering processes; operations across borders; and exerting influence over legitimate social institutions. The fact that this list of items articulates a broad and flexible definition, when compared with other legal texts, is a clear advantage. However, the EU definition has been deemed vague, and of course the minimum number of participants has been, once again, questioned (Arsovska, 2014; de la Corte Ibáñez & Giménez-Salinas Framis, 2010).

Finckenauer (2005) raises another interesting topic that enriches the discussion, namely the difference between organized crime and crime that is organized. The scholar marks the difference between extremely complex and highly organized crimes and what he labels “true organized crime,” or crimes committed by criminal organizations, and thinks that the lack of distinction between these two separate scenarios is dangerous. The author states that organized crime cannot be defined by its activities, but rather on the level of organization associated with the commission of the criminal activity. Earlier typologies of organized crime (Beare, 1996; Best & Luckenbill, 1981; Cressey, 1972; Hagan, 1983; Maltz, 1994a, 1994b) have focused mainly on both organizational criteria, structure, the division of labor, and the relationship organized crime groups have with society. As a result, many of the obtained typologies ended up being outdated as they only could reflect mafia groups in the United States during the 1960s and 1970s, where pyramidal structures, a clear division of labor, and corruption were common (Paoli, 2002). However, the pitfall in that argumentation is that many crimes that are complex may require a network of individuals who work in concert for mutual benefit, but that does not necessarily imply they are part of an organized crime group. Such networks are often small, informal, and short-lived.

Criminal organizations, on the other hand, will have continuity both over time and over crimes; thus for criminal networks to be labeled a criminal organization, they must, first, organize themselves to meet the criteria described below (Finckenauer, 2005). First, they must possess criminal sophistication, which relates to the degree to which criminals plan their offenses. As such, their skill and knowledge levels are also indicative of the degree of sophistication in their abilities. Second, they must possess a structure or divide labor within the organization or group. Highly structured groups will be hierarchical and have defined roles for members where a boss doles out tasks to lower echelons. Third, the members must self-identify as such. Bonding is a major part of this characteristic, which is visible through specific uniform clothing, tattoos, or initiation rituals. Finally, the organization must rely on authority of reputation. In other words, the organization must coerce people either through direct or implied threats that relate to the group's sense of authority and reputation. Beare and Martens (1998) raised the same issue by highlighting the element of bad reputation as a catalyst to groups of offenders that allows them to access a criminal market.

In order to highlight the difference between organized criminals and criminals who are organized, Finckenauer (2005) highlights specific cases such as an American insurance fraud ring (Healy, 2003), Chinese human smuggling (Chin, 2003), drug trafficking (Eck & Gersh, 2000; Natarajan & Belanger, 2008), and international trafficking of stolen vehicles (Clarke & Brown, 2003). Finckenauer (2005) highlights cases where opportunities led to the creation of an entity in order to exploit a particular criminal opportunity or an illicit trade needing an organized participation and execution, committed by many small groups who might even be employed in legitimate businesses. Research has found only a minority of organized crime groups using hierarchal structures, which are typically found in Italy and the United States. Many other groups are less structured and resemble more of a criminal network, particularly as it relates to transit crime such as drug trafficking, human smuggling,

and the like (Kleemans, 2007). That said, Finckenauer's (2005) criteria allows for a range of organizational structures to be included.

The present dissertation uses both Finckenauer's (2005) and Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) frameworks in order to determine if archaeological looting is fueled by organized crime or if it is merely a crime that requires some level of organization. Supply of archaeological material by looters will be examined using Finckenauer's (2005) definition of organized crime groups (by using the criteria of criminal sophistication, structure, self-identification, and authority of reputation) and using Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) framework specifically for structural organization.

4.2. Organizational learning and competitive adaptation

As with organized crime, it is complicated to find a definition of organizational learning, given that there is a lack of agreement among scholars. However, Kenney's (2006; 2007) definition is not only valid, but also concise. According to the author, organizational learning refers to the learning process of organizations understood as a group and how they modify their established practices based on the acquired experience and knowledge.

It is generally agreed that the starting point of research on organizational learning is Herbert Simon's (1997) work *Administrative Behavior*, published in 1945. In this work, Simon argues that organizations adjust their responses according to external stimuli and experiences. Once Simon's work was accepted, a new line of research formed, and organizational learning was applied to fields as diverse as communications systems, policy making processes, or enterprises, among others (Deutsch, 1996; Jarvis, 1976; Kenney, 2007; Lowenthal, 1972).

The first step is to be able to define what an organization is. According to Scott (1998), organizations are collections of participants that, through behaviors that have been

previously patterned, coordinate how they operate. Porter, Lawler and Hackman (1975) stated that an organization must possess five traits: it is formed by individuals or groups of individuals; these individuals are associated together in order to reach certain goals; these individuals perform different tasks among themselves; these individuals act in a coordinated and rule-bound fashion; and these individuals act with a certain temporal continuity.

Learning is one of several actions an organization can fulfill. Organizations learn when participants receive, interpret, and apply information gathered through organizational routines (such as rules, practices, and procedures transforming individual action into collective behavior) (Argyris, 1993; Argyris & Schön, 1996; Simon, 1996). Organizations need to learn, as they need to face challenges, solve problems, and complete tasks. The organization, however, does not learn per se, but its components do. Learning becomes organizational when information and experiences of an organization is codified and stored in artifacts.

According to the literature, organizational learning can be broken down into the following three phases: acquiring, interpreting, and acting on information and experience (Daft & Weick, 1984; Garvin, 2000). The acquisition of information includes know-how, techniques, or practices, among others, helping organizations achieve their goals, through trial and error and search practices (Argyris & Schön, 1996). In the second part of the learning process, the interpretation of information, participants within the organization share perceptions and build understanding, which facilitates making sense of relevant events for the organization. Therefore, analogical reasoning allows participants within an organization to link present and past experiences and help the organization learn (Weick, 1995).

Finally, the last phase involves acting on the acquired information, that is, applying information to collective behavior through routines. Routines will outlast participants, as the best practices will be kept within the organization, even after the people who implemented

them leave the organization. When participants alter routines as a result of acquired and interpreted new information, it is a sign that the organization keeps learning (Zeng, 1999).

According to Kenney (2007), learning cannot become organizational until knowledge is embedded in routines and stored in artifacts. However, organizations differ with respect to the degree to which they make both their rules and artifacts available, and as informal and formal routines embody knowledge and experience, they allow participants to learn from organizational history even when they have not experienced that history themselves. In sum, companies discover information and then participants share and apply it through both formal and informal routines. These phases can occur simultaneously and connect each other through feedback that enables particular behaviors and interpretations to survive while others perish because of their lack of usefulness.

The process of sharing, recording, and interpreting information is done through both formal and informal organizational memories. The former include communicational elements such as databases, correspondence, and files and manuals, among others. The latter include conversations, stories, and myths about the organization. Also, the degree of availability of these systems will make them more or less used (Argyris & Schön, 1996; Levitt & March, 1988). The knowledge being transmitted to the people who make up the organization can be categorized as either *metis* (experimental or intuitive knowledge) or *techné* (abstract technical knowledge).

As *techné* is taught through formal instruction and codified in knowledge-based artifacts, *metis* is learnt through the practice of the activity itself and everyday interaction with other participants, resisting this codification. *Metis*, in this sense, is learned by doing and engaging in the activity *per se*. *Metis* includes several skills depending on the task learnt which people share by communicative interaction between older and newer participants, who gather together in communities of practice (Detienne & Vernant, 1978; Kenney, 2007;

Niccolini, Gherardi & Yanow, 2003; Scott, 1998). This information changes over time, thus modifying, either explicitly or implicitly, routines that already existed but needed improvement (Cook & Yanow, 1993; Weick, 1995).

Until now, organizational learning has been explained with a theoretical patina that assumes that organizations learn in perfect conditions. However, the truth is that organizations learn under unavoidable, human-based complicated conditions, instead of under a perfect vacuum that isolates them from the real world. These conditions might include, among others, bounded rationality, incomplete or imperfect information, inferences or learning disabilities (March, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c; Simon, 1997). Other factors that affect the process of organizational learning, either by facilitating or complicating it, are the size of the organization and the levels of management as set by a particular number of hierarchies present in the organization. These two particular factors, thus, will have an impact on acquiring, interpreting, and acting on the information.

The organizations studied by a variety of disciplines have been legal. Why not, however, apply this theoretical framework either to the misdeeds of legal organizations or to criminal ones, as Williams (2001) argues? When organizational learning and competitive adaptation was applied to criminal organizations, researchers tried to analyze not only how criminal groups learn but also how they resist law enforcement by altering their criminal activities in response to new experiences; how they store this information and experiences; and how they select the most optimal routines to produce the desired results. In sum, organized criminals learn, and they build new skills and practices with the goal of avoiding law enforcement detection.

Kenney (2007) provides examples in his research, applying these two concepts to drug trafficking and terrorism. For example, in drug trafficking, *metis* is essential, as the trade requires one to adapt to changing circumstances. Drug traffickers' smuggling operations

require traits such as craftiness, intuition, deceit, and foresight in many activities, such as the processing, shipping, bribing, or delivering of the drugs, for example. Indeed, drug traffickers learn by doing and observing more experienced colleagues, talking with them, and then performing the tasks on their own. In that sense, drug traffickers learn mostly by *metis* (performing their tasks) rather than by *techné* (book learning). Of course, this does not mean that *techné* does not play a role in drug trafficking, as some organizations might codify *metis* into manuals in order to teach the new recruits. In sum, both *metis* and *techné* are important, given that many skills required might not be easily acquired via abstraction (Kenney, 2007).

As criminal organizations deal with the disruption of their activities by police forces, they engage in competitive adaptation (Kenney,2007) or, in other words, they learn by interacting, gathering, and analyzing information in order to change practices while trying to outsmart police and other opponents in a dynamic interaction. This process also works *a sensu contrario*, given that law enforcement also learns from the illicit activities of criminal organizations. This interaction is central to competitive adaptation. In terms of biology, some scholars see this relationship as a symbiotic one, as both sides depend on each other. Organized criminal groups benefit from the demand created for illicit goods by state prohibitions; they also benefit when a successful police operation dismantles their competition. Terrorist organizations justify their actions by symbolically targeting policies enacted by other states in their countries. Yet at the same time, law enforcement agencies fighting these criminal phenomena need these criminal organizations in order to keep existing, solidify their identities and funding, or put their means to a very specific end (Andreas, 2000; Kenney, 2007).

Even though it is a relatively new theoretical angle there is a growing body of literature regarding the relationships of transnational criminal networks and the learning techniques of, mostly, drug traffickers and terrorists. See Jackson *et al* (2005), Hamm (2005),

Forest, 2006, Nesser, 2008, Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Jones, 2008, Stenerson, 2008, Morselli, Petit and Giguère (2007a; 2007b). In the cultural heritage crime field, Campbell (2013) has applied criminal network analysis to chart interactions from source to market in the illicit antiquities trade. This particular framework works well in order to address the gap in the literature related to the learning techniques of *tombaroli*, as looters fit well within the different traits that operationalize the definition of organizations used in the theoretical framework of this research project. According to Scott (1998), organizations are collections of participants that, through behaviors that have been previously patterned, coordinate how they operate.

Porter, Lawler, and Hackman's (1975) definition stated an organization must have the following traits: it is formed by individuals or groups of individuals; these individuals are associated with each other in order to reach certain goals; these individuals perform different tasks; these individuals act in coordination and according to a set of rules; and these individuals act with a certain temporal continuity. Once one accepts that *tombaroli* can be labeled an organization, one can see how they learn as a collective. In fact, it is essential to understand first how looters are organized, in order to assess how *tombaroli* learn and to analyze how looters acquire and analyze knowledge and experience and adapt their organizations and operations in response to feedback.

5. Conclusions

In the first chapter the problem of archaeological looting was introduced both on a global and an Italian level and connected indirectly to the perpetrators, the *tombaroli*. The present chapter, by contrast, has dealt directly and exclusively with the *tombaroli* and their presence in the literature. The previous chapter hinted at the scarcity of how literature on Italian looters. The deliberate systematic literature review in this chapter has shown and reviewed

the very limited research dealing with the *tombaroli* and at the same time has identified numerous gaps in this literature.

More precisely, this chapter's results indicate that there is a lack of knowledge in three areas: the linkage of looters to traditional organized crime, their organization, and their learning processes. It has revealed that there is an excess of descriptive research and a lack of exploratory and explanatory research. Thanks to the existing descriptive research the field has progressed since the interest arose in the early 1960s towards knowing more of the illicit excavators known as *tombaroli* and their activities. However, there is a serious lack of innovative research, mostly from a criminological standpoint. As such, it is expected that this research project will provide a deeper understanding of the three core issues raised in this chapter by asking and answering pertinent research questions that will be introduced in the next chapter, which is devoted to the methods used in the present research project.

CHAPTER 3

*L'ESPERIENZA NON BASTA:*³

METHODS OF THE RESEARCH PROJECT

It is easy to like the man we shall call Antonio Induno. He is a softly spoken man in his mid-forties who smiles often. His manner is friendly and direct and he speaks candidly and enthusiastically about his work. Mr. Induno is a tomb-robber.

(Ruiz, 2000)

Michael Kenney, in his book *From Pablo to Osama* (2007) describes his research as paleontology because, as the author states, the secretive nature of criminal and extremist networks complicated his efforts to acquire and analyze valid and reliable data. Indeed, this is the case for this research project. Like narcos and terrorists, *tombaroli* themselves are not easily accessible, and interviews with law enforcement experts merely produce documents whose primary function is gathering intelligence. The adaptation of data to social sciences is not always possible or easy, as each side asks different kinds of questions, or uses different meanings for the same terms. These factors complicate the efforts of any researcher to obtain and analyze information that is both valid and reliable.

As chapter two demonstrated, there is also a shortage of analysis in the study of Italian looters. Consequently, there is a shortage of empirical studies that have a valid methodology section telling a wider audience how the used information was acquired and how the examined researchers obtained particular results. This chapter illustrates these important points.

³ Experience is not enough.

1. Research questions employed in this research project

This research project tries to answer two general research questions which are broken down into several sub-questions, which in turn stem from the gaps revealed in the systematic literature review regarding both the relationship of *tombaroli* with organized crime and the learning processes of *tombaroli*. The first general research question asks: what is the nature of the relationship between *tombaroli* and organized crime? Out of this general research question emerge three sub-questions. The first one specifically refers to the nature of the relationship between *tombaroli* and traditional Italian organized crime groups such as Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita, or the Camorra, among others. This question is important, as it was seen in chapter two how there is a significant lack of agreement regarding the relationship between *tombaroli* and traditional Italian organized crime.

A second sub-question asks what traits *tombaroli* share with organized crime. It is important to know whether tomb raiders in and of themselves have traits that could define them as organized criminals or whether they are just criminals that require an organization in order to commit their crimes. Finally, the last research sub-question addresses the following: what forms of organizational structure do *tombaroli* adopt? This is an important element that will end the inquiry on organized crime by trying to assess in which forms *tombaroli* organize to conduct their tasks.

The second general research question asks: how do *tombaroli* learn and adapt during their careers? Broadly, this question's aim is to analyze how *tombaroli* learn both technical and intuitive knowledge in order to become tomb raiders during their criminal careers, and how they adapt and learn again in a hostile environment where disruptive police operations or the competition with other factions is normal due to the illicit nature of their activity. Out of this broad research question arise four specific sub-questions, which are required to answer it fully.

The first sub-question bridges the first research question on organized crime with the second one, on learning. This sub-question asks how *tombaroli* organize themselves, yet this time it tries to answer organizational issues from a descriptive angle, taking into account elements such as the undertaking of group vs. individual activities, the planning of their criminal activities, recruitment tasks, internal hierarchy, and the following of orders.

The second sub-question is how *tombaroli* learn their tasks. This is, eminently, the most introductory part to this general research question, as it introduces and links organizational learning within the reality of tomb raiding. Also, the question analyzes whether the way *tombaroli* organize might impact on learning and adapting. The third and fourth sub-questions complement each other. The third sub-question asks how *tombaroli* adapt their activities in response to new knowledge and/or experience and how often this happens.

The fourth sub-question asks what parts of these adaptations are due to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents or competing groups of looters. The importance of these questions lies in gathering data referring to elements of adaptability, understood as learning anew through adapting old routines into new ones.

2. Research design

Researching secretive criminal activities such as tomb raiding is filled with challenges. To begin with, one must take into account the geographical location of this criminal activity, which occurs in the vast fields of Italy as concealed as possible. One must also take into account the further fact that, unlike other criminals, *tombaroli* are difficult to encounter because they are rarely sentenced to prison.

As such, members of this illicit enterprise are not easily accessible, and criminologists have not yet achieved direct access to *tombaroli*, forcing them to rely on other participants

within the illicit antiquities trade like archaeologists (Proulx, 2010) or dealers (Mackenzie, 2005). The information produced by Carabinieri or the Guardia di Finanza in Italy is ample, yet their goal is not to generate information for criminologists or other social scientists. This is a problem that is not only encountered in this particular research, but one that has plagued criminological research (Abadinsky, 1983; Cressey, 1967; Kenney, 2007).

Having witnessed the inherent difficulties to this research project, quantitative methods may not be able to draw on the data necessary to address the proposed research purposes. Generally, quantitative methods provide a general picture of associations, relationships, and trends, with an emphasis on processes experienced by people, their responses, the contexts where they interact, and their thoughts and behaviors governing their responses (Creswell, 2013). Therefore, the fundamental assumptions and key features that distinguish what it means to proceed from a qualitative stance fit well with this study.

These features refer to understanding the processes by which events and actions take place, developing contextual understanding, facilitating interactivity between researcher and participants, adopting an interpretative status, and maintaining design flexibility. There are many reasons for the use of qualitative research techniques in the present study: the need to study such a particular and hidden population like Italian tomb raiders, the desire to generate richly detailed data, and the need for a deep understanding of this particular issue. This research study is not an experimental effort but rather an interpretative one. Through all the qualitative methods used, researchers strive to reveal meanings, through scientific inference, by basing their interpretations on the observable data collected (in that sense, see Geertz, 1973).

More specifically, the study is most suited for a case study design, defined by Cressey (2013) as a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system over time, through detailed and in-depth data collection involving multiple

sources of information, resulting in a case description and case themes (see, among others, Berg, 2004; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Stake, 1994, 1995, 2000, 2001). As Merriam (1998) indicated, a qualitative case study fits well for understanding and interpreting the looting of archaeological heritage perpetrated by *tombbaroli* in Italy, as she states that,

A case study design is employed to gain an in-depth understanding of the situation and meaning for those involved. The interest is in process rather than outcomes, in context rather than a specific variable, in discovery rather than confirmation. Insights gleaned from case study can directly influence policy, practice and future research (p. 19).

As such, the present research fits well with Merriam's criteria as it sought to better understand the phenomenon of Italian tomb raiding by trying to study the relationship between traditional Italian organized crime and archaeological looting and how looters learn and adapt to external factors during their careers. Case study research began by identifying the specific case of tomb raiders, bounded by place, in different geographical areas of Italy where *tombbaroli* are active and by time, ranging from the last decades of last century to current times. The cases are instrumental, as the intent is to understand the problem of archaeological looting in Italy through them (Cressey, 2013; Stake, 1995). In order to achieve an in-depth understanding of the case, many forms of qualitative data were collected, including interviews, observations, documents, and audiovisual material.

3. Research sample

Qualitative sampling differs from quantitative sampling, as the former does not involve drawing representative samples from a huge number of cases. As Flick (1998) states on

qualitative research, "...it is their relevance to the research topic rather than their representativeness which determines the way in which the people to be studied are selected" (p. 41). This statement takes more relevance, once again, with the study of hidden populations and especially with organized criminals. Several criminologists have targeted a particular offender population, like Rawlinson (2008) with Russian criminals, Troshinky and Blank (2008) with human traffickers, or Johansen (2008) with the illicit alcohol market in Norway.

This qualitative research project is based on a sample selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling procedure. Previous researchers within the field of organized crime have used purposive sampling, which involves, according to Von Lampe (2008), accessing specific participants identified beforehand as important for their research. In this fashion, Junninen (2008) studied Finnish organized criminals, who purposively were active during the 1990s in that country, with the goal to collect individual depictions of the everyday life of professional criminals; in order to achieve this, the author established a list of items that the sample had to fulfill. Arsovska (2008) also used this type of sampling technique when researching Albanian criminals, by selecting a sample of participants according to their expertise on the subject.

The interview sample consisted of police officers, prosecutors, archaeologists, ministry officials, journalists, writers, criminologists, and tomb raiders. As mentioned, there has been an effort to include in the sample representatives all groups who have a daily experience with the phenomenon of *tombbaroli*. Had the sample consisted of only one group, the research project might have been seen either as unbalanced or even apologetic. As such, the sample can be seen as a multiple data set including the views of all major groups affected by looting, while at the same time retaining its focus on the activities of *tombbaroli*.

These sometimes conflicting accounts of particular issues between groups help to provide a check on the overall veracity of data by the inclusion of different perspectives on the research questions and enabling the comparability of data. A first stage of interviews involved purposive sampling involving Italian police officers, prosecutors, archaeologists and journalists. The subjects were selected based on their substantial expertise on the topic. After an extensive systematic literature review including newspapers, academic articles, and attendance of conferences in the field, a list was compiled of the names of active and retired *tombaroli*, police officers, archaeologists, and journalists who had a prolonged contact with the studied phenomenon.

A second stage of interviews involved snowball sampling (also known as network or chain sampling: see Miles and Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2001) was used to locate *tombaroli*. Many studies researching hidden, criminal populations use snowball sampling in order to access their samples. Of the abovementioned studies in this section, most of them relied on this technique. Examples of these research studies are Zhang and Chin's (2002) study of Chinese human smuggling organizations, Ruggiero and Khan's (2006) study of drug supply Asian networks in the United Kingdom, Siegel's (2008) study of Russian Mafiosi, and Antonopoulos' (2008) study of retired cigarette smugglers. Subjects within the legal sphere or from the community who had contacts with tomb raiders were seen as "seeds," or those who start the chain of referrals. Some of the contacted subjects indicated how they could introduce the researcher both to well-known and more reserved tomb raiders. Annex B summarizes the respondents' data.

The inclusive criteria for all participants in all phases of this study was to be Italian citizens aged eighteen or over and have knowledge of the phenomenon of archaeological looting for at least two years both in the legal or illegal sphere, which is a delimiting time frame that aimed to ensure a proper level of experience of the subject. Archaeologists and

journalists with knowledge on the topic were exempted from the requirement of being an Italian citizen. In these cases, however, it was required that they had spent at least two years in Italy and had direct contact with the topic studied.

An important question to address is whether the sample is representative. Initially fifty-one subjects were targeted as key informants and all were contacted with the intention of creating a final sample frame of important members within the field of Italian archaeological looting. These key informants were sought due to their substantial knowledge of looting occurring in Italy, mostly based on their own professional experience. Only twenty-four responded positively to the request for an interview. The rest declined due to reasons as varied as health issues, conflicting schedules, not wanting to discuss criminal activities, or simply not being interested, including those who never responded.

The most important interviews were with five former *tombatori*, although two out of these five were retired. These *tombatori* were contacted either because they were famous (they appeared frequently in the media, or have written books, for example) or because police officers offered to introduce them; these *tombatori* had functioned as police snitches (in Italian, *antenne*). The sample, in consequence, is clearly biased, as qualitative samples tend to be, in favor of those who responded positively to be interviewed. The contact with the fifty-one targets was done via phone call using Skype and when no phone number was available, respondents were contacted via their emails. In these instances, a personalized letter was emailed to the target, with a follow-up email sent if no reply was received within fifteen days. A few of them never responded and were dropped from the sample.

4. Data collection

The central method to data collection was the qualitative interview. A total of 24 interviews were conducted in Rome, Montalto di Castro, La Giustiniana, Montefiascone, Cerveteri and

Naples, between December 2016 and July 2017. These data, as stated, consist of core of interviews with a sample of key respondents in relation to the research questions that guide this dissertation.

Most of the interviews involved interviewer and interviewee only, yet three interviews were conducted with two, three and four interviewees simultaneously. The interviews ranged in length between one and two hours, but most of the interviews were approximately two hours long. The interviews took place in the privacy of the subjects' homes, offices, a car, and discreet zones in bars. All of them were conducted using Italian as the spoken language. Most of the interviews were recorded, after having read along with the interviewee the informed consent and having answered doubts they might have regarding their rights. However, some of the interviewees did not consent to being recorded, and then their responses were written down as the interview proceeded. One of the interviewees could not fit into his schedule the possibility of a meeting and responded via email.

The interviews were transcribed verbatim in Italian. Quotations from this in this research project have been translated into English with no correction of grammar, to avoid inadvertently altering the meaning. Insertions of fragments not coming from the interviewees have been bracketed in regular type in order to differentiate them from their words, which appear in italics. These are intended to clarify the interviewee's statements or protect an identity. Ellipses have been used to indicate an omission from the interviewee's transcript, in cases where, for example, non-essential phrases or sentences have been purposely left out in order to present the data in a concise fashion.

The interviews were semi-structured, proceeding on the basis of the schedule of questions listed in the questionnaires (see annex C and D for complete versions of the questionnaires), though they occasionally departed from this schedule to explore areas that the respondents saw as important or to pursue lines of inquiry that seemed pertinent but were

unanticipated. Also, this format allowed keeping the interviewees on themes relevant to both researched topics while allowing them, at the same time, to talk about their own experiences. It was feared that an entirely unguided interview would have produced irrelevant data, while a highly structured questionnaire would not have allowed space for the inclusion of topics that the interviewees saw as relevant but might not have been considered when drafting the questions.

In order to answer the general research question on organized crime and its sub-questions, the respondents were asked about the involvement of large Italian criminal organizations and also smaller organizations, and their possible involvement with Italian looters. These criminal organizations have been culled from the most recent reports of international police forces such as EUROPOL or INTERPOL. To answer whether *tombbaroli* shared traits with organized criminals, the chosen definitional list of factors used was the one issued by the European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe. As such, the same criteria were used to answer this specific research question. Another list of items used in order to enhance the European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe list of factors is Finckenaue's (2005) criteria in order to assess whether a specific criminal group was either an organized criminal group or whether they merely performed criminal activities that needed to be organized.

These items include criminal sophistication and self-identification as attributes not covered by the European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe list, and structure, and authority of reputation as items already covered by the previous checklist, yet used again. Finally, in order to address the organization of tomb raiders, organizational structure as theorized by Curtis (1995) and used in previous research such as Natarajan and Belanger (1998) was used as a theoretical framework, albeit adapted to the case in hand.

The organizational structure classification used covers the following four categories: freelancers (or individuals who are described as such when there is no formal hierarchy or division of labor) whose transactions occur without expectations for future transactions; family businesses, where criminal activity may operate as a family operation and where a division of labor may exist, but is not formally defined or structured; communal businesses, where the division of labor is not formally defined, but rather flexible, mostly involving a small group of people involved in the activity with a clearly identified boss; and corporations, where the division of labor is clearly defined and corresponds to a defined formal structure with a large number of individuals involved in the activities. To assess organizational and structural elements of *tomboroli*, questions were asked on how looters organize themselves, changes within the organizational structure, and levels of hierarchy.

In order to answer the general research question about organizational learning and adaptation, questions were asked about how *tomboroli* learn to perform their tasks through the classification of the learning of these tasks either in *metis*, understood as experimental or intuitive knowledge or in *techné*, understood as abstract technical knowledge. The items used to answer this specific research question also included information on apprenticeships; the gathering, recording and storing of information; often and by whom the information is drawn. Regarding competitive adaptation, the questionnaire uses two items: the adjustment of behaviors in response either to past experiences or new information and whether there is a learning process from past mistakes or just a simple reaction to these.

So far, this present section has described the main data-gathering technique employed in this research project: the interview. It is also worth mentioning the usage of autobiographies of *tomboroli* as data points. Biographies have long been used in criminology, even though this discipline that remains skeptical as to the value of the information the

individual has to offer. However, since the appearance of the Chicago School, the biographical account has been an accepted data source.

Even though autobiographies are not deemed mainstream data points, and thus long neglected, many advocate their resurrection as a tool for research development, recognizing their methodological and theoretical advances (Goodey, 2000). The same can be said of *tombaroli*'s biographies, which, once the justificatory and self-aggrandizing rhetoric is purged, become important sources in a field where accessing this very hidden population is time consuming. Other forms of documents used were official records and news stories mostly, that subjects recommended and were consequently checked.



FIGURE 5. Since the 1980s, famous *tombaroli* have written their autobiographies. This body of literature has been growing since then.
Source: the author (2017)

With these documents, qualitative document analysis was performed to integrate their information as an additional source to the data provided by the interviewees. By analyzing

their meaning, an attempt has been made to make theoretical sense of the autobiographies, official documents, and some relevant pieces of news. As with other qualitative data treated in this research project, the aim was to be systematic and analytic, but not so rigid as to be unable to fit this information into the codes created after reading the transcripts.

Fieldwork included two trips to the Necropolis of Cerveteri, a heavily looted archaeological site, with the intention to see first-hand the phenomenon from the participants on both the legal side and illegal side. As such, one of the interviewed *tombatori* suggested that he should ask an old looter to guide him around an area filled with previously looted and emptied tombs. Out of an entire morning visiting the area, information was compiled in the form of memos, pictures, and video recordings. The old *tombatore* was not interviewed with the questionnaire, as his understanding of the questions was severely impaired due to age and education.

The second trip to Cerveteri was scheduled with an interviewed archaeologist from the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, in charge of international seizures of trafficked Italian cultural heritage. That trip took an entire weekend and the opportunity to interview four archaeologists and one *tombatore* arose. Once again, the field trip allowed for the collection of memos, pictures, and video recordings of a legal archaeological excavation and, most importantly, the rapport between archaeologists and looters. A final method employed was textual legal analysis, in order to document and critique the relevant laws, with the inclusion of commentaries made both at the time of drafting those laws and thereafter, from a criminal policy standpoint.

5. Data analysis

The transcription of the interviews produced a considerable amount of pages filled with data. After transcribing the interviews, the challenge then became to make sense of the data,

reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework. Because qualitative research seeks to develop an understanding of a particular phenomenon from the perspective of those involved in it, according to Maxwell (2013), a content analysis of the data obtained in the interviews and several other supports was conducted. This method of analysis is appropriate for analyzing different forms of communication (Ellis, Hartley & Walsh, 2010; Kraska & Lawrence Neuman, 2008; Lichtman, 2014; Spencer *et al*, 2014; Withrow, 2014). Within the case study approach, it was decided to opt for an embedded analysis, described as an analysis of specific aspects of the case (Yin, 2009).

The content analysis was focused mostly on the interviews, which are the main data source of the dissertation. The goal was to identify themes emerging from both general and sub-questions. As the transcriptions were in Italian, the responses were read in order to discover emerging patterns and themes through an interpretative lens that fits with an exploratory research project like the present one.

Broadly, data were coded, analyzed, and organized first by research question and then by categories and subcategories. More specifically, in the open coding stage of the analysis, the codes developed over time as they began to be filled by the data. If codes started too broad, eventually they became narrower. More often, what was coded in early interviews was then shown through links with texts in later interviews to be a specific part of a larger area of interest. As a result, the process of open coding proceeded not only as an exercise of tagging data, but also as a conscious, intellectual task of producing themes. Initially created tags were themselves organized, enabling fully saturated and all-inclusive codes to emerge.

Analytic categories are directly aligned with each of the project's research questions. In fact, these same analytic categories were used to code the data and will be used to present the findings. In the analysis, connecting patterns were primarily sought within the analytic categories, as well as the connections or themes that emerged among various categories. As a

secondary level of analysis, the relevant theory and produced research were tied in, as these themes are compared and contrasted to issues raised by the literature.

The analysis followed the open, axial, and selective coding stages (Creswell, 2013; Kraska & Neuman, 2008). In the open coding phase, data were organized under twenty-two codes. In the axial coding phase, these twenty-two codes were filed under five category headings, which seemed to best represent the common themes shared by groups of coded data. In the selective coding phase, the relationship with the axial codes was examined, so the connections between codes could be explained.

Instrumentally speaking, alphanumeric codes were assigned and identified in a color-coded chart sheet that guided the created data matrix in three spreadsheets: one for the matrix, one for the codebook, and a final one for frequencies. Transcribed and coded quotations that were deemed important and relevant were cut and pasted into the data matrix. The goal was to articulate a number of themes that were linked together, either similarly or divergently, in a way that they could collectively analyze archaeological looting perpetrated by *tombaroli* in Italy nowadays and answer the research questions.

In order to achieve this goal, a three-layered process was followed: a first layer involved the examination and comparison of threads and patterns within categories; a second layer involved the same work but this time across categories; finally, a third layer placed the information gathered with respect to prior research, thus comparing and contrasting issues raised in the previous chapter about the literature. All three layers were iteratively taken into account simultaneously while conducting the data analysis. The obtained results not only informed a presentation and a discussion of them, but also revealed directions for broader implications of research. As a result, both conclusions but also practical and research-based recommendations could be formulated.

Qualitative analysis allowed for the respondent's answers to tell a story regarding Italian archaeological looting, thus creating meaning for the responses of the interviewees and allowing an interpretative reading of the data. Once keywords, phrases, and themes were identified, findings were produced that allowed research questions to be answered. The focus on these key issues allows one to understand the complexity of the phenomenon but not to generalize about it. By the way of thick description (Denzin, 2001), a broad range of experiences were documented, thereby providing an opportunity for the reader to better understand the reality of archaeological looting in Italy. The emphasis throughout the following two chapters is to let participants speak for themselves. Illustrative quotations taken from interview transcripts attempt to portray multiple participant perspectives and capture some of the richness and complexity of the subject matter. Where appropriate, critical incident data are woven in with interview data to augment and solidify the discussion.

6. Ethical considerations

At the same time that the proposal of this dissertation was defended, Institutional Review Board (IRB) clearance was obtained (project number 601567-1). The IRB at John Jay College of Criminal Justice deemed the study's risk level as "More than Minimal Risk." Specifically, the IRB's one main concern was that this type of sampling may expose the *tombaroli* to breach of confidentiality by referring to other participants. In order to avoid this risk, looters were not asked to refer to other looters, and the five of them were interviewed in different geographical locations. For those participants within the legal sphere, there was no further risk to their reputation or safety, as they were interviewed mostly in their workplaces regarding their knowledge about looting and their line of work fighting against it. There were no personal risks involved.

The IRB approval process also involved a close examination of both the consent protocol and the questionnaire. Specifically, some of the questions were modified after notification to IRB and the subsequent approval, and the Informed Consent Document (ICD) was revised to simplify language to the 6th grade level and reduce jargon. Once the IRB at John Jay College of Criminal Justice set the parameters for the interviews, these guidelines informed the events.

It was anticipated that no physical or psychological discomfort tarnished this research project by either affecting the research participants or the researcher. However, this research project employed various safeguards to protect both the participants and their rights. Given that the licit research subjects were police officers, archaeologists, officials from the Ministry of Culture, prosecutors, judges, and journalists and that the illicit research subjects were *tombaroli*, there was no intention of using deception or covert observation, which pose serious ethical threats to research. Also, there was no group that belonged to any special population, given that tomb raiding is an activity that does not involve prison terms. Therefore, the research project eliminated both the risk of coercion and the creation of new inequalities.

Interviewees were offered, at the moment of explaining the informed consent, both confidentiality and, above all, anonymity. Some of the interviewees took it while others had no problem with their names being attached to a forthcoming presentation of the data or publication of this project. However, it was decided to mitigate risks concerning the privacy of the respondents by adhering to a strict process of protecting their identity through the usage of pseudonyms. None of the interviewees requested to see and approve their transcript before it entered the dissertation.

Observing illegal behavior was not central to this particular research project, but as the study revolved around tomb raiding in Italy, it involved direct discussion of it. In order to

improve the chance of *tomboroli* participating in the present research project, the aim of the discussion was directed towards the key topics presented in this research project. Possible incriminating information appearing in the data was acknowledged and discussed with the participants.

Informed consent is not only a fundamental principle of ethical research but also a priority throughout the study. In that sense, informed consent became pivotal in avoiding risks regarding the disclosure of incriminating information. After discussing the overall design of the interviews with each participant, informed consent was requested verbally. The option of requesting consent verbally was based, in this research project, upon the fact that many participants might find it risky to review and sign forms. Likewise, Troshinky and Blank's (2008) research on sex traffickers used this form of consent. Since the name and the signature of the participants are the only elements that link them to the research project, the signed consent would be the only means allowing for the identification of the respondent's responses, and also for the risk of breach of confidentiality. Also, as the research topic is sensitive, waiving the signature of the subjects reduced possible harm.

No comments were repeated outside of the interview setting, and no statements were ever directly linked to the names of the respondents. Their concerns were addressed as frequently as participants asked them, and they knew they could discontinue their participation in this study at any time. When interviewees allowed themselves to be recorded, these files were destroyed once transcribed. Information was recorded in files protected by encryption and password generating software, stored on a non-networked and password-protected hard drive, and a matrix of passwords was stored under lock and key in a hard file in a safe. In sum, the participants' rights and interests had priority whenever choices arose regarding both the reporting and dissemination of the data related to their privacy and the risk of breach of confidentiality. The main aim throughout the study was to maintain

confidentiality and to protect the subjects, not only in this research project but also in every publication thereof, even though sometimes this is not entirely under the control of the principal researcher.

7. Issues of data trustworthiness and derived limitations

During the entire period of the data collection process, the nature of the researcher's relationship with the participants was of interviewer (whose professional background was always disclosed to all participants) and interviewee. As months passed and interviews were conducted, the researcher's role evolved from a position of outsider. The interviewees saw the researcher as a curious scholar from Spain (the trait of being a foreigner has to be emphasized, when reactivity is concerned) interested in the topic of archaeological looting, generously devoting him some of their time and seemingly pleased to have a receptive mind to whom they could present their task and impressions. As an example, interviewees often commented that they found it amusing that a Spanish criminologist wanted to know about Italian archaeological looting, a topic they also felt had not deserved enough attention even in their own country by their own criminology scholars. Interviews were conducted in fluent Italian, which was seen as an asset. Questionnaires were translated with the help of an Italian philologist, in order to refine the pitch and delivery with the goal of clarifying meaning and avoiding possible misunderstandings while interviewing expert respondents.

As interviews progressed, a bank of information from previous interviews was amassed that was used in establishing a different rapport from previous encounters. Up to that moment, the establishment of rapport was aided by sharing race, class and, in most instances, educational level. In most instances, gender was also shared, as few female subjects were interviewed, and none of them, *tombaroli*. Two of them were archaeologists; and finally, an expert who wrote about *tombaroli*. It was an aim of this research project to have a diverse

sample, both regarding age and gender; however, it must be noted that regarding *tombaroli*, there is only one account in the existing literature about the involvement of women in this kind of illicit activity (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1986).

With the passing of time, the researcher's role evolved towards, becoming an insider in the field. For example, both *tombaroli* and other interviewees made some confidences at particular moments; put a lot of effort in the snowball process; or allowed questions about them which otherwise would have been deemed impertinent. Specifically with *tombaroli*, after gaining their trust through previous meetings before the interviews took place, they ended up speaking freely about their illegal activities to what they thought was a sympathetic listener.

The nationality of the researcher was the most significant impediment, concerning rapport, with one particular group: law enforcement officials. Specifically, it created a difficulty about the potentially sensitive information that they could provide during interviews, especially if they were members of the highest ranks within the force. Also, *tombaroli*, who live in rural areas, posed a cultural challenge, due to being an outsider to a rural community in another country. As such, gaining trust and rapport was anticipated as a difficulty, given that some qualitative literature in the field has already stressed this particular issue (Migliore, 1991). As rapport was of paramount importance, the norm was to always interview *tombaroli* on a second (or third or so forth) occasion.

All of the key informants understood the purpose of this research project: a doctoral dissertation on *tombaroli* with the sole goal of research. It cannot be ruled out that subjects from the sample lied or that their memories were flawed or biased. Concerning law enforcement officials, one of their biased effects could have been to exaggerate the magnitude of the problem. In any case, it cannot be asserted that these biases have been fully

eliminated from the analysis. A further degree of triangulation has been built into the study in order to attempt to diminish the possible impact of these biases.

A multi-data approach typical of case studies was chosen, which gave further confidence in the validity of the collected data. Steps were taken to ensure the maximum strength of the validity of the obtained data: to begin with, law enforcement officials were not only high-ranking officials with a bureaucratically inclined mind but also low-ranking officers who have roamed the Italian fields trying to dismantle illicit diggings. Interview data were situated in a study of the existing literature on the issue of looting in Italy, which gives the raw data context; however, data that interviewees gave was validated through other external sources. In order to obtain stronger data reliability, information was crosschecked, confirming that the original informant was not the source of the corroborated information. If assertions could not be verified they were not included in the stage of data analysis. Efforts were made to locate evidence that built a code or a theme from different sources. This evidence was then used to triangulate information in order to provide validity in the findings.

The second technique used to strengthen validity was the use of rich data by the compilation of transcripts from the interviews and memos. Participants' reactions and the changes throughout the research processes were documented before the actual analysis of the data. Rich data has an impact on reliability, as procedures have been documented in order to demonstrate how coding schemes and themes have been used consistently. In order to do so, research journals and memos provided an audit trail on how the information was collected and analyzed, chronicling the evolution of the research project and documenting every rationale for possible choices made during the process. In sum, triangulation of data sources and data collection methods tried to yield a fuller and richer picture of the phenomenon of *tombatori* from a criminological point of view, while counterbalancing flaws inherent to the usage of a single method.

Regarding content, as other studies that inquired about the level of permeation of organized crime in the looting of antiquities have acknowledged as a limitation, archaeologists might not know what organized crime is or what forms organized crime adopt in a specific geographical area; or they might even have culturally biased images of what constitutes organized crime (Bowman, 2008; Proulx, 2011a, 2011b). The same can be said of the archaeologists and experts consulted in this dissertation; the degree of knowledge about organized crime varied from respondent to respondent. And once again it is worth mentioning that, regarding *tombaroli*, there is always the possibility that they are not telling the truth about such a thorny issue for them.

8. Conclusions

This chapter has provided the reader with a detailed description of the dissertation's research methods. Qualitative case study methodology was used to study the problem and phenomenon of contemporary Italian tomb raiding. Data collection was made through interviews mostly, where the participant sample was made up of 24 purposely selected individuals, who through snowball sampling, permitted the interviewing of five *tombaroli*. Other forms of qualitative data were observations, documents, and audiovisual material.

The resulting data were reviewed against the literature about this phenomenon as well as emergent themes that appeared in the analysis phase. An analysis enabled key themes from the findings to be identified. Through a comparison with the literature, interpretations, and conclusions were drawn, and recommendations were offered. Finally, trustworthiness issues were accounted for and mitigated through several techniques. Now that the explanation of this research project's methodology is complete, it is time to assess the first of the two issues that motivates this dissertation: what is the nature of the relationship between *tombaroli* and organized crime?

CHAPTER 4

*UMBERTO, IL MARCHIGIANO, L'ORFEO, FARGETTA... E TUTTI GLI ALTRI:*⁴

TOMBAROLI AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP

WITH ORGANIZED CRIME

“It would seem that he had connections with people from the south.”

“Are they getting interested in art now?” Brunetti asked.

“Yes, it seems drugs and prostitutes aren’t enough anymore.”

(Leon, 1996)

Writers and journalists alike are passionate about cultural heritage crime. Unfortunately, they often draw hasty conclusions about the subject to attract readers. For example, on the 12th of January 2015, Ferrante, Teodonio and Viettone (2015), journalists in one of the biggest news outlets of Italy, *La Repubblica*, published a story named *I tesori dell’arte nelle mani della mafia* (The treasures of art in the hands of the Mafia). With this running headline, it looks like the press has solved a mystery that scholars keep debating: traditional Italian organized crime has both a solid link and an interest in archaeological heritage.

In the article, some well-known Italian crime bosses’ names are mingled with those already famous antique dealers that have been the main protagonists of previous years’ court cases. Already in the first paragraph, the journalists link mafia bosses Matteo Messina Denaro and Giuseppe Fontana to dealer Gianfranco Becchina. Furthermore, a cartoon tries to illustrate this relation depicting an attendee of an exhibition who is carefully observing a modern painting, labeled *Collezione Totò Riina*, referring to the infamous and very violent

⁴ Umberto, the guy from Le Marche, Orfeo, Fargetta... and all the others.

boss of bosses in the Italian mafia, as if the paintings in the exhibit have been lent by the mobster to the museum.

This case is an example of the passion used when reporting about cultural heritage crime and organized crime; this passion, however, does not translate into scientific knowledge. The article is a missed opportunity to enlighten readers. It refers to both art and archaeology (thus mixing two different cultural heritage crime forms: art theft and archaeological looting); it does not mention *tomboroli* as the source of the trafficked material; and it uses examples that are a decade old, such as, the then fourteen-year-old case against Gianfranco Becchina.

Is it true that the Italian mafia is interested in archaeological goods? Is the notion of archaeomafia a myth or a reality? In order to answer this question, this chapter integrates both relevant findings from research conducted in Italy and the existing literature. This chapter argues that this belief is inaccurate. This chapter allows the reader to explore the relationship of *tomboroli* and organized crime by taking them on a journey that not only traverses Italian archaeological necropolises nearby tiny towns but also other important places such as the headquarters of the art squad of the Italian police and the vaults of the Italian ministry of culture. Finally, appendix B provides the reader with a detailed list of all those who have participated in the present research project and who appear in this chapter.

1. *Tomboroli* and the relationship with traditional Italian organized crime

Chapter two proved that most of the forty-six articles did not see any kind of relationship between organized crime and *tomboroli*. Only a few articles considered traditional Italian organized crime to have an investment in the traffic of illicitly obtained antiquities in Italy, and a majority of them neither denied nor supported any involvement of *tomboroli* in Italian organized crime. It is precisely this conundrum within literature that generates so many

questions surrounding the relationship between traditional Italian organized crime and *tombatori*. Based on the available data, what can be said about this contested relationship between *tombatori* and traditional Italian organized crime? Three important results concerning this relationship are described in the following sections. Before presenting these results it must be remembered that the Italian criminal organizations presented in this section have been culled from the most recent reports of international police forces such as EUROPOL or INTERPOL; thus the groups covered include minor ones as well as the most important ones.

1.1. Italian organized crime is not specialized in cultural heritage

The first important finding is the lack of interest of organized crime in archaeology when compared to the attention organized criminals have paid to other manifestations of cultural heritage such as paintings or sculptures, to name a few. Existing literature and the majority of expert respondents (strongly) disagreed regarding a possible relationship between *tombatori* and organized crime. Less than half of the respondents (strongly) agreed with this possible relationship, yet the literature did not back their opinions.

Many interviewed experts thought that even in archaeological areas that exist in provinces where important organized crime groups are rampant, there is little evidence that these groups are trafficking with archaeological items. This lack of interest is mostly based on the fact that organized criminals are more prone to steal art than loot archaeological items, as it is easier to take well-known, valuable pieces instead of learn to find unknown pieces buried in unearthed tombs.

Italian traditional organized crime does steal works of art. Tristano is a professor at the University of Naples who was interviewed on-line, who claimed that

Cases are too numerous to name them all. Examining magistrate Diana De Martino in the 2012 National Anti-Mafia Directorate affirmed: “The involvement of characters belonging to mafia crime in theft and possession of some of the most important works stolen from the state's patrimony is documented in investigative and procedural acquisitions.” Artworks have been discovered and confiscated at the homes’ of bosses such as Beniamino Zappia, Gioacchino Campolo, boss Michele Zagaria and others (Tristano, e-mail communication, May 19, 2017).

Both extant literature and Tristano highlighted important cases of Italian cultural heritage stolen by organized crime, even though in most instances data come from journalists who only describe the incidents. The first case involved the theft of a masterpiece by Caravaggio, stolen on October 16, 1969, from the altar of the chapel of San Lorenzo in the Sicilian capital, Palermo. A former Mafioso-turned-informant claimed in 1996 that he had stolen the work on the orders of boss Gaetano Badalamenti. Others say an amateur lifted it and peddled it to the Mafia. Theories have circulated that rats and pigs ruined it while it was stored at a farm; while others thought it could even be hidden in another country (Scarlini, 2012).

The second case involved a car bomb on May 27, 1993, which exploded in a street behind the Uffizi Gallery, killing six people, wounding twenty-six others, and destroying or damaging dozens of works in the gallery's priceless art collection. Three works (one by the 17th-century Dutch painter van Honthorst and two by the Italian Manfredi were destroyed) and thirty others, including *The Death of Adonis*, by del Piombo, were badly damaged. Italian authorities, after investigating the attack, ascribed the explosion to the Mafia (Iannizzotto, 2006).

A third case of organized crime preying on other forms of cultural heritage occurred in Caserta, a province near Naples. Carlo, an archaeologist who works for the Ministry of Culture, explained that Caserta is well known for being an important stronghold of Camorra, one of the Italian organized crime groups. Someone within the group was interested in stealing artistic structures from buildings to embellish their houses. Carlo participated in the police operation that ended seizing stolen marble staircases and other artistic elements such as columns, friezes, or even stone slabs, among others, looted from the famous Borbonic palace of Carditello in Regi Lagni (Erbani, 2011). However, while these cases have been documented and attributed to organized crime, they obviously do not fit within the scope of this dissertation, as they do not involved looted antiquities. What these cases illustrate is the fact that organized criminals are better suited to steal, bomb, or plunder rather than excavate and loot in search of archaeological goods.

Interviewed experts noted that economic reasons explain why traditional Italian organized crime groups do not engage in the looting of tombs. Organized crime groups who are used to amassing large profits trafficking other illegal commodities cannot expect to achieve the same profits with archaeological items. After all, other commodities can be produced or obtained *en masse* while archaeological items can be hard to find, are non-renewable, and are not valuable enough to justify this permanent involvement of organized crime.

One of the oldest *tombaroli*, Alfredo, who has been excavating for many decades, talked about his gains during his active years. Alfredo used to be an important looter until he decided to quit after being caught for the second time. Now he works as a repairman and a supervisor near Lake Bolsena, in the north of Italy, in the province of Viterbo, where the interview was conducted. As stated by the former looter,

In an area like Bisenzio, where we dug, most of the objects we found in the tombs could be, the objects that were inside could be around two million lire a day, do you understand? They carried an average of two million lire a day (\$1227). As we were four in the group, it was just about 500,000 lire (\$307). So, as you can see, it's not that there were huge profits, do you understand? That's why you cannot talk about organized crime. Organized crime won't get dirt on their hands for 500,000 lire, do you understand? (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

Despite the media's sensationalistic portrayals of mafia connections to the *tombaroli*, this statement by an actual *tombaroli* perfectly explains organized crime's lack of interest in archaeological looting.

This lack of interest in archaeological items has created organized crime's lack of specialization in this sort of trafficking. Furthermore, it is even rare to find this sort of trafficking combined with other smuggled goods. As stated, for these organized criminals to have access to archaeological items buried in tombs, they would either need the collaboration of *tombaroli*, or learn to do that task themselves. Data collected in this study did not find any solid evidence for either of these scenarios.

Extant literature highlights the lack of evidence supporting organized crime groups' specialization in antiquities along other illegal goods such as drugs. For example, the possible connection between the illicit traffic in antiquities and the illicit trafficking of narcotics (to use drugs as an example) is, in the words of Yates (2014), often discussed but poorly understood. As the author claims, many of the primary centers of narcotics cultivation also experience looting of archaeological sites, while at the same time many of the countries where there is a demand for narcotics are also consumers of illicit antiquities. Yet Yates (2014) conducted ethnographic research in Guatemala focusing on the nexus between drugs

and illicit antiquities, and makes discoveries similar to what has been uncovered in the present research project; the archaeologist found that "...most likely the actual cartels are not actively or specifically engaging in the looting of Maya sites or the trafficking of Maya antiquities... The evidence for a direct connection simply is not there, at least not yet" (p. 34).

As briefly stated, the same could be applied to the Italian case. Expert respondents claimed that the connection between drugs or other trafficked goods and trafficking of antiquities does not occur in Italy as in other countries in the world. Back in Rome, prosecutor Bartolo, who specialized in prosecuting criminal cases involving important archaeological pieces trafficked outside Italy, labeled the relationship between organized crime and *tombaroli* as very diluted and further argued that this form of criminality cannot be compared to other criminal organizations that operate worldwide or even to established criminal organizations operating in Italy. In any case, the expert stated that the problem with *tombaroli* is completely different from manifestations observed in Colombia or in Peru, where trafficking of antiquities is strongly linked to drug trafficking; in Italy, these ties do not exist (Interview, Olgiata, 2017). In sum, Italian expert respondents conclude that they have not witnessed any possible specialization of organized crime regarding archaeological looting.

1.2. Italian organized crime controls the terrain where *tombaroli* might excavate in the south of the country but not in the north

Expert respondents in the north, where there has always been a prevalent activity of *tombaroli* because of the high concentration of Etruscan necropolises, highlight the fact that there is no presence in the north of criminal organizations or the infiltration of organized crime groups from the south. According to these experts, in the north the involvement in

looting is done occasionally at a small-scale and at a local level, as always happens in towns, nearby the necropolises where the pieces might be found. Their points of view agree with existing literature defining looting as the task of small town inhabitants who occasionally loot (Carabinieri, 2008; Isman, 2009a; Pastore, 2001; Pastore, 2011; Watson & Todeschini, 2006).

In fact, Maffio and Riccardo, police officers working at the archaeological section of the art squad of Carabinieri, denied that the situation in the south is out of control and in the hands of organized crime. By contrast, some documentary accounts, such as Hamblin (1970) or Stille (1999), depict entire teams of *tombatori* working under the rule of a local Mafioso. However, these sources are outdated and do not seem to represent the reality of looting in the South nowadays (thus having the effect of perpetuating the myth of mafia involvement), as police officers stated. According to these expert respondents forces, *tombatori* in the south are the same as *tombatori* in the north.

As such, the involvement of organized crime in archaeological zones in the south is still unverified. A retired Vice-Commandant of the Carabinieri's art squad, Enrico, who during his years in the force commanded many art police divisions, stated that organized crime groups in the south have been found with looted archaeological items, yet these are anecdotal accounts involving individuals, not entire organizations. In his opinion, these criminal organizations do not have a specialized investment in looted antiquities (Interview, Rome, 2016).

These claims are consistent both with the literature on archaeological looting that claims that looting is a local, small business both in the north and in the south of Italy (Carabinieri, 2008; Isman, 2009a; Pastore, 2001, 2011; Watson & Todeschini, 2006) and also on the dynamics and criminal mobility of organizations across Italy. The south, called by Italians *il mezzogiorno*, is the zone where Italian organized crime has historically thrived. Through an excess of clientelism, patronage, vast construction projects, among other

elements, organized crime expanded from its original cities and towns to other spots that were free of it (Stille, 1993). But expert respondents claim that there are no organized crime groups moving to the north to control the flow of looted antiquities, as they would to control other financial or real estate assets (Di Nicola & Savona, 1998).

Another retired interviewee, the *tombarolo* Gennaro, referred to the only known case of involvement of an organized crime group in the north. Gennaro, who raided tombs for decades, witnessed the great raid of Italian archaeological heritage, and sold looted items to all the important dealers of the time, claimed that he heard from a trustworthy source (the respondent did not want to provide information about the source) in his town that if they found a valuable item, *tombaroli* had to give it to Cosa Nostra. Likewise, buyers had to acquire the goods through this criminal organization. Worried, he finished stating that this was not a good scenario because he thought that *tombaroli* in the town are not prepared to face a structure such as Cosa Nostra (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017). The story has not been corroborated by other sources and is thus labeled as anecdotal.

The only differentiating factor in the looting of archaeological heritage between the Italian north and south refers to the control of the territory by certain organized groups. Maffio, one of the two Carabinieri interviewed in Rome, stated how

In the south of Italy, criminal organizations hold a lot of power in the land they control. Evidently, that land might be filled with archaeological riches, thus making the task of looters difficult, who need to confront these criminal organizations and pay fees. That is not the case of the north, where *tombaroli* are free to excavate where they please as there is no possession of lands by organized crime in the northern provinces (Interview, Rome, 2017).

Giuseppe, an investigative journalist, also shares this point of view. When interviewed in Rome, he stated that in southern areas heavily controlled by traditional organized crime groups such as Puglia, Calabria, or Sicily the control of the territory exercised by these groups is higher than that exercised by law enforcement. For example, the control of the territory in Calabria, Puglia, or Sicily by organized crime does not allow Sicilian *tombatori* to excavate without the permission of whoever governs that area (Interview, Rome, 2016).

Therefore, several expert respondents thought that no one in the south can excavate without their permission. Another important investigative journalist, Linda, stated that if looters are not approved to dig there by 'Ndrangheta, Cosa Nostra, or the Sacra Corona Unita, they cannot dig (Interview, Rome, 2017). This statement coincides with what Luigi Perticarari, the famous *tombatore*, stated in his autobiography. He had knowledge that in the region of Campania one had to pay an organized crime boss in order to be able to dig (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1986).

Andrea, archeologist, and Luca, expert, both working at the Italian Ministry of Culture stated how they had never found evidence of organized crime controlling territory in the north. However, they think that wherever there is a criminal organization controlling the land, it follows that there is at least a control of the archaeological looting that happens in the area perpetrated by its members (Interview, Rome, 2017).

In sum, many expert respondents claimed not to have witnessed the involvement of organized crime in archaeological looting in the south. They also claimed that there is no influence of criminal groups of the south involved in the looting of northern archeological sites. However, they thought it was plausible that *tombatori* might have to pay to excavate territory that was controlled by organized criminals.

1.3. Anecdotal participation of traditional Italian organized crime groups in archaeological looting

So far the conclusion is that evidence does not point towards an involvement of traditional organized crime in archaeological looting. However, if one accepts the assumption that there might be some tenuous involvement of organized crime groups with archaeological looting, then the next step would be to ask respondents which group(s) might participate in the trafficking of illicitly obtained antiquities in Italy.

According to Finckenauer (2005), “Mafia is a social construct. It is an idea. It is a cultural artifact. As such, it extends beyond the people, the places, and the activities that comprise it” (p. 73). This idea, this cultural artifact, however, can be translated into reality and labeled by law enforcement as a serious threat (see, for example, EUROPOL, 2013). The four Italian Mafia-type organizations are the Sicilian Mafia, the Calabrian ‘Ndrangheta, the Neapolitan Camorra, and the Apulian *Sacra Corona Unita*, among others in the region (Abadinsky, 2010; Antimafia, 2016; EUROPOL, 2013; Santino, 2003).

According to EUROPOL’s (2013) analysis of these four groups, Cosa Nostra, is the oldest and most widespread group of the Sicilian mafia. Some younger groups include the so-called *Stidda* and important clans not affiliated with Cosa Nostra such as the Cursottis and the Laudanis, which, unlike Cosa Nostra, are not centralized, and manage their activities, mostly violent heists, individually. Cosa Nostra mostly deals with several criminal operations with a particular increase in cocaine trafficking and the subsequent money laundering, while cooperating with other criminal organizations worldwide. In comparison to the Neapolitan Camorra, they tend to keep a low profile, whereas Camorra bosses tend to sport a flashy lifestyle. Another difference is that Camorra is a horizontal cluster of clans and families, fighting against each other. Their principal criminal activities include drug trafficking, cigarette smuggling, illicit waste dumping or the production of counterfeit currency.

'Ndrangheta has become one of the richest and most powerful criminal organizations in the world because of their good relationships with producers of cocaine. This organization has a dominant position not only in the European drug market but has also infiltrated legal markets such as transport, real estate, and construction, through corruption, while attempting to expand worldwide through migrant communities from Calabria. The organization is constituted through units named *'ndrine* with a hierarchical structure. Finally, in Apulia law enforcement has traced the activities of several groups such as Sacra Corona Unita, Società Foggiana, the Camorra Barese or the Gargano's mafia. These groups all started with petty criminal activities and moved to more ambitious activities such as drugs, weapons, or human trafficking (EUROPOL, 2013). In sum, as Santino (2003) states, "There is not a monarchy... in the organized crime world, but there are many republics that variously interact and are protagonists of the international division of criminal labor" (p. 83).

The respondents in this study were asked to elaborate on the traditional Italian organized criminal groups that could be involved in archaeological looting. The respondents could choose between the groups identified in the previous paragraphs (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita) and an open option that would include smaller, lesser-known groups such as Stidda or minor clans. Because of the possibility that all of these groups could be involved in antiquities looting, the respondents could name them all or, at least, several of them if they so wished. Figure 6 charts their responses.

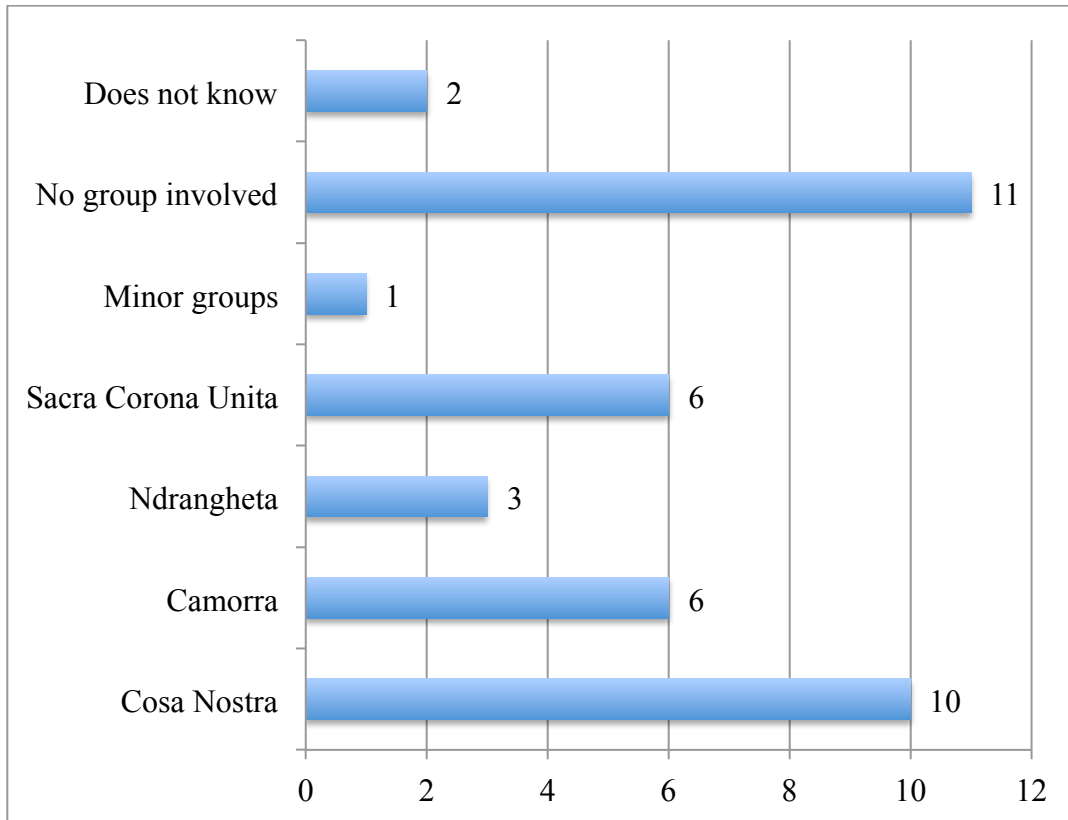


FIGURE 6: Responses of participants about which criminal groups *tombaroli* might cooperate with (N = 24).

Source: the author

The majority of the respondents thought that there was no involvement of specific Italian organized crime groups with archaeological looting. This response establishes a logical continuity with the previous sections, which reported the lack of evidence supporting the relationship between traditional Italian organized crime groups and *tombaroli*, based on the lack of interest of organized crime towards the trafficking of archaeological material, the lack of the specialization in this type of traffic, and the absence of a stable trend of cases instead of sporadic incidents.

Out of the available existing groups, most of the expert respondents referred to Cosa Nostra in Sicily. However, their responses were all geared towards the control of the territory that Cosa Nostra's Mafiosi exert over *tombaroli*. For example, Roberto, a criminology professor at University of Rome-III, highlighted that although he has not been able to

substantiate a contact point between *tombaroli* and organized crime, mafiosi in Sicily control the territory. Moreover, Roberto focused on the fact that looting of archaeological items is not a criminal business that involves mafia-type organized crime, but it is a business that emerges in a sector already heavily controlled by mafia-type organized crime (Interview, Rome, 2017).

A parallel example would be the crime labeled as “ortomafia.” Organized crime is involved with agricultural products grown in regions controlled by Cosa Nostra, such as mozzarella or olive oil (Lavorgna & Sergi, 2014). Similarly, Agrigento, a province on the island of Sicily, is both a territory that is controlled by the Cosa Nostra and a zone rich in archaeological heritage. Like these other cases organized crime profits from the benefits derived from controlling areas rich with tombs, but it does not necessarily control the tomb raiding trade.

Beyond this control, however, there is little evidence of the Cosa Nostra’s involvement in the trafficking of antiquities. Interviews, literature, and other sources repeatedly refer to two important cases regarding the possible participation of Cosa Nostra in archaeological looting. One was the case of the well-known mafia boss Matteo Messina Denaro, who ordered the theft of the *Satiro Danzante* (The Dancing Satyr), a bronze statue attributed to Praxiteles, the great Greek sculptor of the 4th century BCE.

Although the full details are still unclear, the mafia boss seems to have wanted to steal the statue in order to sell it to a foreign art collector (although others claim he wanted the statue himself); in doing so, he proclaimed his power in the area of Mazara del Vallo over boss Natale Bonafede. Still, this instance is not representative of the interest of organized crime in archaeological looting as the statue was found in the sea, and not by *tombaroli*. However, Matteo’s father was Francesco Messina Denaro, a mafia boss who began his criminal career as a *tombaroli* in Sicily, exploiting the archaeological site of Selinunte during

the years of greatest activity of looters (Isman, 2009b). Francesco Messina Denaro was probably the *tombarolo* that Hamblin (1970) mentioned in her account of archaeological looting in Sicily, as recounted in chapter two of this dissertation.

The other case refers to the brother of the famous convicted art dealer Giacomo Medici, Roberto. In September 1973 he and a friend, Ferdinando Mateucci, drove towards the south. After two days, Roberto Medici's car was found completely burned in the town of San Cesareo, in the province of Lecce, in Puglia. Roberto Medici and Ferdinando Mateucci were never found. Giacomo Medici testified that his brother was sent to the south with a huge amount of cash to buy art, yet he fell prey of the son of Don Mico Tripodo, a boss of the Calabrian 'Ndrangheta (Isman, 2009a). However, this case again fails to clearly link organized crime with *tombaroli*.

In sum, both cases do not provide clear evidence of a relationship between organized crime and archaeological trafficking. As Giuseppe, the investigative journalist, summarized after commenting on these cases, there is no way of knowing more at the moment about this involvement. Certainly, in some cases Mafiosi have been found with archaeological items. However, it is also evident that the Mafioso certainly did not dig the tomb himself, because he is not capable of doing so; if interested, he will need someone who does it for him. And what they do is use *tombaroli*. As the expert stated, "... when you have a contiguity of territory, business becomes communal, right? Inevitably" (Interview, Rome, 2016).

Camorra and Sacra Corona Unita have been the second most mentioned organized crime groups after Cosa Nostra by expert respondents. Giorgio is a retired police officer from the Italian finance police. He worked in the art squad and thought that Camorra, a group so involved in the trafficking of drugs had to be also involved in antiquities. More precisely, he stated that the Finance Police had encountered cases where both drugs and antiquities were involved. According to him, "...there is a connection because there is always a chance of

making money with archaeology” (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017). The respondent, however, could not offer any information on these cases, and a search for other sources did not provide any relevant results. Pieces of news only mentioned feeble links between Camorra and the trafficking of antiquities. Although the criminal group’s name appeared in the headline, there was no mention of it in the body of the piece (In Primapagina, n.d.).

Camorra: scoperto traffico di reperti archeologici



Tags:

Cronaca

Cultura

Territorio:

Territorio

I Carabinieri del Comando Tutela Patrimonio Culturale hanno condotto una maxi operazione contro il traffico illecito di reperti rubati nelle più grandi aree archeologiche italiane, tra cui Pompei. 142 gli indagati e più di un centinaio i provvedimenti di perquisizione. Oltre 2 mila i beni archeologici sequestrati. L'indagine, intitolata "Artemide", è partita dal furto di una porzione di affresco dalla Casa di Nettuno a Pompei e punta alla disarticolazione "di un gruppo strutturato, operante nell'intera Italia meridionale (particolarmente Campania e Puglia), dedito agli scavi clandestini, alla ricettazione e all'illecita commercializzazione di beni culturali".

FIGURE 7. A short piece of news linking looting of archaeological sites with Camorra in the headline, yet the short body of the piece omits any linkage to this organized crime group.

Source: In Primapagina, n.d.

Similarly, the respondents who mentioned the Sacra Corona Unita did not provide any information about their involvement in the trafficking of antiquities. Equally, there is no

presence of Sacra Corona Unita in the literature concerning Italian archaeological looting. The presence of this group in the press related to trafficking of antiquities is feeble at best.

Finally, 'Ndrangheta was the least mentioned group. These expert respondents thought this criminal organization to be the least involved in the trade of illicit antiquities when compared to the rest. Recently, Camorra has been alleged by ISIS to have received in Italy trafficked looted archaeological items (de Conto, 2016; Quirico, 2016; Ruggiero, 2016). However, Carlo, the archaeologist who became a guide in the second of the field trips and who had collaborated in the case, stated that the press was exaggerating. True, looted antiquities coming from Syria had been intercepted at the Italian port of Gioia Tauro, in the province of Calabria, and Camorra certainly might have helped this. But, he stated, "If the boss of 'Ndrangheta put his hand in the container he would say, 'But what is it? Stones?' That is, they are so ignorant... no, impossible" (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017). Finally, Tristano, the archaeologist at the University in Naples, was the only one participant who mentioned minor groups and family clans, but once again, these were cases that broadly involved cultural heritage and not archaeological items (Tristano, e-mail communication, May 19, 2017).

To conclude, the relationship with traditional Italian criminal organizations seems sporadic and anecdotal. Neither the responses of experts nor the consulted documentary sources can determine a solid link of any given analyzed organization to the trafficking of looted antiquities.

2. Tombaroli as organized crime

As there was no evidence of traditional Italian organized crime involved in the trafficking of looted antiquities, the next step was to assess whether *tombaroli* could fit the description of organized criminals. As stated in the previous chapter, the criteria employed to define organized crime were taken from the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of

Europe. Precisely because of the heterogeneity of manifestations concerning organized crime, these criteria, sponsored by important institutions, can serve as a checklist. The European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe's definition is ample and flexible ; it allows for the inclusion of a greater number of traits of organized crime than other definitions which are too conventional and rigid. The following two sections chart their responses on both mandatory and optional criteria.

2.1. Mandatory criteria

The mandatory criteria employed to define organized crime by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe are the collaboration between more than two people; extending over a prolonged or indefinite period; the suspicion of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty; and a central goal of profit and or/power. All of them have to appear in any studied phenomenon susceptible to be labeled as organized crime. Figure 8 charts the responses of the project's participants in relationship to the mentioned mandatory criteria.

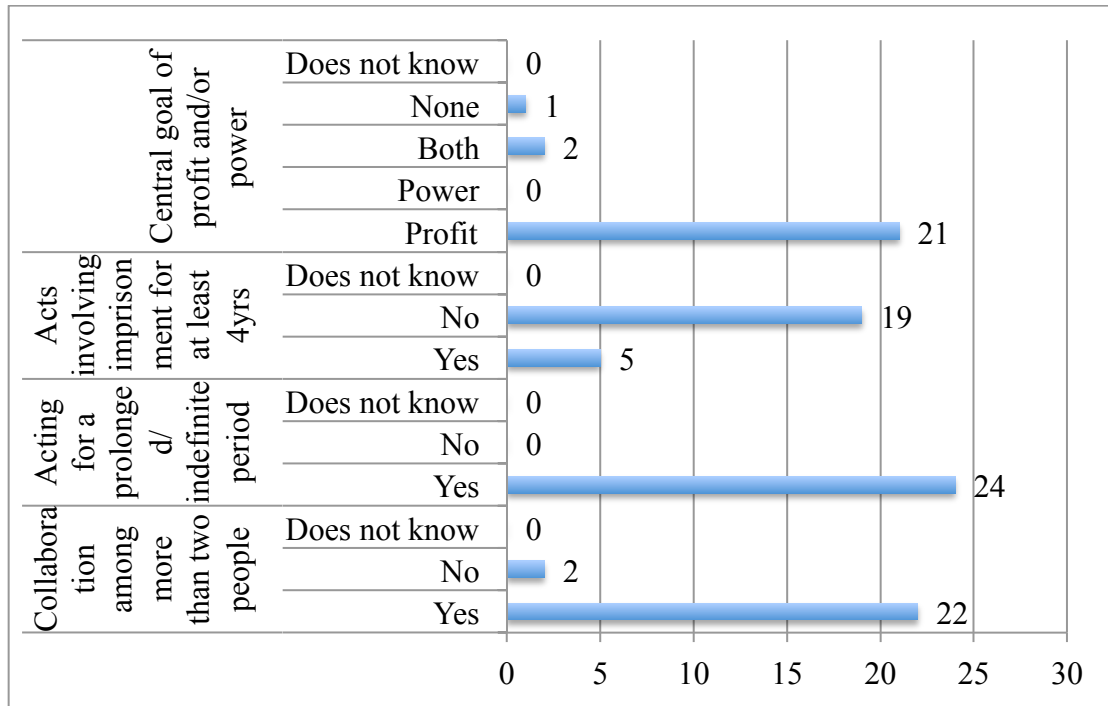


FIGURE 8: Opinion of respondents about the presence of the European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe’s mandatory traits in *tombaroli* (N = 24).
 Source: the author

As shown in Figure 8, regarding the first of the mandatory criteria, the collaboration between more than two people, almost all participants answered affirmatively. Confirming what the systematic literature review highlighted regarding the group nature of looting, the majority of expert respondents referred to compact groups that, on average, comprised between two and five participants. This is not a fixed rule. For example, prosecutor Bartolo once prosecuted a group of ten *tombaroli* (Interview, Olgiata, 2017), while active archaeologists interviewed in the second of the field trips mostly reported witnessing small groups of three individuals at most (Interviews, Cerveteri, 2017). These groups tend to use the same participants over time, even though members are free to join, quit, or rejoin as they please. Carlo, the archaeologist at the Ministry of Culture, stated that

He [referring to a well-known antiquities dealer] has worked not only for a long period of time but also with the same team of people. If you were able to look at his seized documents, the same names appear: *tombaroli*, restorers, people trafficking the pieces out of Italy... they were always the same. It works better if the people are always the same (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

Interviewed *tombaroli* gave interesting insights about the composition of their teams. They manifested that the limit of participants was mandated for economic (“...because beyond five people there is no profit anymore”) and organizational reasons (“We are four or five, but no more because later it becomes hardly manageable”) (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017; Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017; Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Autobiographies of looters abound with examples concerning the tasks performed by members. Broadly, one *tombarolo* performs the task of watching and alerting the others of the presence of strangers or police patrols (named the *Palo*, the post); others dig; and there is one who sorts the found material. Expert respondents and existing literature coincide regarding these closed roles (Bordo, 1987; Perticarari; 1986; Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992; among others).

A significant element raised by expert respondents is the fact that *tombaroli* use more or less manpower in relation to the type of digging performed. That is, *tombaroli* organize the group depending on the difficulty of the excavation ahead of them. For example, some *tombaroli* like Pietro Casasanta (Isman, 2009a) devoted his looting to mostly Roman villas. That implies that when he wanted to loot marble in ancient Roman villas, he needed the person that knew how to use a bulldozer, and then somebody who could transport the marbles (Isman, 2009a). Likewise, a *tombarolo* who specializes in tombs needs more manpower to dig.

A final factor concerning the need for working in groups was the dangers inherent to the very act of digging. *Tombaroli* excavate without the precautions an archaeologist employs. Unlike *tombaroli*, archaeologists pay special attention about where they place themselves and their heavy equipment around the surrounding tombs to avoid collapses, as the terrain is structurally weaker due to excavations. Angelo, a retired *tombarolo*, showed the great height of some of the chambers of the tombs, thus highlighting the danger and damage if the structure collapsed: working in groups tends to raise the probabilities of rescuing another *tombarolo* if buried alive. Literature produced by *tombaroli* once again highlights this necessity (Bordo, 1987; Perticarari, 1986; Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992).

As can be seen in figure 8 regarding the second of the criteria, all of the participants agreed upon the fact that *tombaroli* act for a prolonged or indefinite period of time. *Tombaroli* usually start at an early age (strength is required for such a physically demanding task) and stop when they no longer have the strength to keep going (Bordo, 1987; Perticarari, 1986; Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992). For example, Gennaro, who was in his eighties was the first of the two retired *tombaroli* interviewed for this dissertation; he stated how he began in the 1950s and finished excavating with his team ten years ago (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017). The second, Alfredo, slightly younger (in his sixties), stated how he began when he was fifteen and stopped when he was fifty-seven (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Both their careers extended over five decades.

Acting for a prolonged or indefinite period of time is vital due to the need to know the terrain where the illicit excavations will take place. As Giorgio, the retired police officer of the financial police's art squad stated, "They have to know the zones where they move well ... some of them are specialists and know the terrain and where to go to dig and find good pieces perfectly well" (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017). Such prolonged periods of time also allow *tombaroli* to amass a significant quantity of treasures, as information related to police

seizures demonstrates (Carabinieri, 2008; Nistri, 2008; Rush & Benedetti Millington, 2015). For example, Operation Andromeda found 337 archaeological finds from the areas of Lazio, Puglia, Sardinia, and Magna Graecia, all repatriated from Geneva; Operation Iphigenia recovered 23 funerary urns and 3000 archaeological items; Operation RoViNa recovered 520 archaeological objects (Povoledo, 2013; Rush & Benedetti Millington, 2015).

The majority of respondents disregarded the presence of the third criterion: the commission of criminal acts involving punishment of prison for four years or more. According to the cultural heritage and landscape law, passed in 2004, that punishes looting in its article 175.a,

Anyone who performs archaeological research or, in general, works for the discovery of things referred to in art. 10 [Article 10 defines in detail the concept of what a cultural item is according to the law by listing them] without a concession, or does not comply with the requirements of the administration will be punished with the arrest of up to one year and a fine between € 310 and € 3,099 (\$366 to \$3655) (Carabinieri, 2008; Iannizzotto; 2006).

Other crimes related to archaeological looting are fencing (Art. 648 of the Italian Criminal Code), for those who buy looted archaeological items; and associating with others in order to engage in criminal activity, which can be found in article 416 of the Italian Criminal Code (Carabinieri, 2008; Scotti 2002). Paradoxically, article 416 *bis*, also known as the Rognoni-La Torre Act, introduced the crime of participation in organized criminal associations in law no. 646 1982, and this is the article applied to members of Italian organized crime. (Turone, 2008; Vigna, 2006).

The majority of expert respondents agreed that it is impossible for a *tombarolo* who is only charged with the crime of illicit digging to end up in prison because of the low penalty attached to this crime. Therefore, it is extremely rare to see a *tombarolo* behind bars. For example, *tombaroli* were asked whether they had been arrested and prosecuted, and what their punishment was. Alfredo, the *tombarolo* turned supervisor, was sentenced to fifteen months of jail for each of his two arrests, but both times his sentence was suspended (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). The second and third *tombaroli* who were interviewed, Giovanni and Patrizio, are brothers who dig together; they were each sentenced to house arrest for a duration of six months, but their sentences were also suspended (Interviews, La Giustiniana, 2017). Gennaro, the oldest of all of the *tombaroli*, was fined, even though his lawyer appealed and later won the case, so the conviction was overturned. As payment, his defense attorney requested looted artifacts (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017). The fifth *tombarolo*, Alessio, has never been arrested for looting, but he had to demonstrate to police that the goods seized at his house were crafted by him. In the end, he was not convicted (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

All of the *tombaroli* stated that they do not know of any *tombarolo* serving time in prison, and *tombaroli* do not seem to worry about serving time in prison. In fact, paradoxically, as law enforcement becomes more aware of their activities, the law becomes softer on them. Prosecutor Bartolo specifically complained that he cannot apply aggravating circumstances to this crime with the latest criminal code reform (Interview, Olgiata, 2017). The approval of the Cirielli law on December 5 2005, number 251, abolished some of the aggravating circumstances that could be used previously (Isman, 2009).

The possibility of *tombaroli* ending up in prison exists. However, according to the legislative framework, going to prison can only happen when a *tombarolo* becomes a recidivist and has been arrested several times. As Carlo stated,

They [*tombaroli*] do not even care about going to prison. After all, what happens? They serve a year, tops. It is a holiday for them. They reorganize, they meet new people, and when they leave, as long as they still have the money they made with them, they are happy (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

The last mandatory criterion refers to organized criminals acting towards a goal based upon profit and/or power. The vast majority of respondents agreed that *tombaroli* are motivated solely by economic profit. In fact, all of the *tombaroli* frankly admitted that they do it for money. However, as Alfredo, the looter, stated, as the days of the great raid are long gone, looters will never become rich. As he put it,

No, no. No *tombarolo* works anymore as a full time looter, understand? It is all people who have another job, and the profit obtained from looting tombs is used to round off a salary, or a bad season in agriculture, understand? (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

That is why, as was seen in the first mandatory criterion, concerning collaboration between more than two people, it is normal that groups are not very big, so that looters can be rewarded with bigger shares.

However, during the period of the great raid, some *tombaroli* made an impressive amount of money compared to their daytime jobs in rural Italy. For example, Watson & Todeschini (2007) analyzed the gains of *tombarolo* Giuseppe Evangelisti in different years according to documentary evidence produced in his trial. In the year 1998, his lootings earned him 81,750,000 lire (\$68,000). 2000 was a better year for him, as he cashed 164 million lire (\$135,000). As evidence covered several years, the expert witness, Maurizio

Pellegrini, was able to calculate that in four years Evangelisti had made €185,000 (\$215,768). Also, during the period of the great raid, when looting was for some *tombaroli* a full-time job, they used to receive regular salaries rather than being paid for their discoveries (Watson & Todeschini, 2007; Isman, 2009a).

Tombaroli are suppliers and if they cannot find clients, they look for middlemen and dealers to place their discoveries. Middlemen and dealers, however, only pay a small percentage of the total value of the piece to those *tombaroli*. In those instances, out of the total amount of money any given piece may produce, the big profit is not for the looter. For example, according to the investigative journalist Linda, the dealer who sells the product to a wealthy client is the one who profits the most (Interview, Rome, 2017).

2.2. Optional criteria

The optional criteria employed to define organized crime by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe are a specialized division of labor; exercising measures of discipline and control; employing violence or other means of intimidation; employing commercial, business-like structures; participation in money laundering processes; operations across borders; and exerting influence over legitimate social institutions. The following figure charts the responses of the project's participants in relationship to these optional criteria.

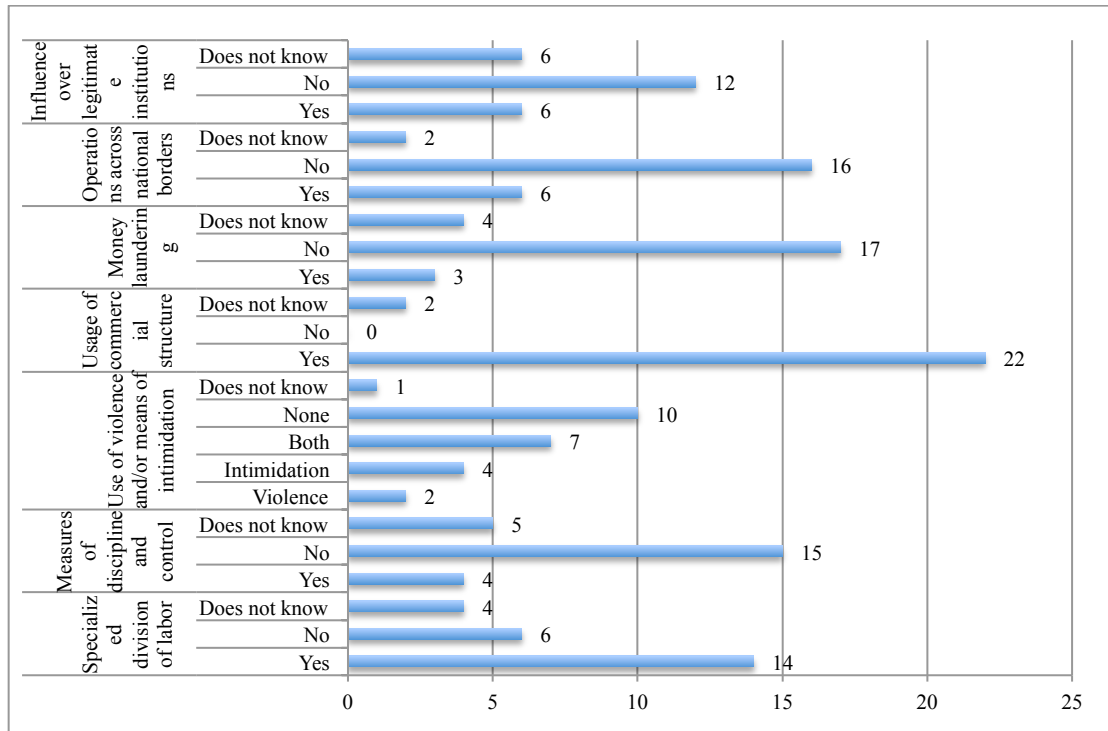


FIGURE 9: Opinion of respondents about the presence of the European Commission/EUROPOL/Council of Europe's optional traits in *tombaroli* (N = 24).
 Source: the author

Regarding the specialized division of labor, most of the respondents agreed that members of the team have pre-established, well-defined roles. According to the responses of the experts, the task of *tombaroli* can be divided into an operative part, related to the excavation (this phase can be divided between people who look for areas where to excavate, and the people who actually excavate), and a commercial part, related to selling the unearthed items. In each phase, members have their own functions. For example, as prosecutor Bartolo indicated, the brute will dig faster, the tech-savvy will use the metal detector, the person experienced in archeology will value the piece accordingly, and so on (Interview, Olgiata, 2017). In fact, this division of labor can also be dictated by other factors such as age or experience. Carlo, the archaeologist interviewed in the second field trip used the following example:

There was, I remember, the old *tombarolo* who is thought to be “the professor.” He is the one that always considers himself more of a scholar, more learned than the others. And of course there are the workers. Therefore you always find the workers and the older one who decides where to go and excavate, and who has contacts with the middlemen. It is not only a specialized division of labor, but it is obvious that there is a small hierarchy in the team (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

The next voluntary criterion refers to the use of measures of discipline and control. The majority of respondents thought that there is no need for any kind of punishment if orders are not followed, ascertaining that discipline and control between *tombaroli* was anecdotal. Most of the expert respondents stated that in their respective careers they never heard of measures of discipline or found any *tombarolo* who talked about this. The third criterion deals with the usage of violence and/or means of intimidation. Once again most of the expert respondents thought that *tombaroli* do not use violence or means of intimidation, as the territory where to find tombs is so vast that there is no need to engage in violent tactics of control. In fact, Andrea and Luca, the archaeologist and expert who have served as expert witnesses in court, stated that they heard *tombaroli* threatening other looters, but they never deemed the threats serious enough (Interview, Rome, 2017).

As with the last criterion, exceptions turn out to be quite illustrative of the instances where violence or intimidation has been used. Extant literature points to mild instances of violence between looters as several sources have documented how rivalry between looters leads them to cheat one another. This then triggers acts of revenge (Thoden van der Velzen, 1996). For example, Silver (2009) explained how teams of looters not only need extra protection against law enforcement, but also against rival gangs of looters. Ruiz (2000) interviewed a *tombarolo* nicknamed Antonio, who revealed that

... we are not like the Mafia; there is no violence but there is a code of honour... it is a matter of loyalty. If I get messed around, then I'll make an anonymous call to the Carabinieri [as a way of denouncing the activities of unruly *tombaroli*] (p. 4).

Expert respondents and data obtained in field trips also proved the existence of cases of violence or intimidation between *tombaroli* or between looters and others. Carla is a topographic archaeologist at the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (the National Council of Research) in Rome, the highest research center in the country, specializing in areas such as biomedicine, physics, chemistry, engineering, and also cultural heritage. She is in charge of documenting instances of archaeological destruction caused not only by *tombaroli* but also by construction sites and other agents. Carla explained in the interview the frightening moment when a looter threatened her with a pistol while asking for information about what she was doing in the middle of the forest. The archaeologist was able to diffuse the situation, but it clearly indicates that some *tombaroli* have the potential to become violent offenders (Interview, Rome, 2017).

In the second of the field trips, Carlo, the archaeologist working at the Ministry of Culture, explained how he was threatened and later slapped by a *tombarolo* as the looter thought the archaeologist was interfering with his task. In fact, the archaeologist admitted that some of them were not serious *tombaroli* but drunken teenagers or even drug users that occasionally helped looters in order to procure money, thus highlighting the difference between the old and new guard of *tombaroli*. In any case, this expert does not remember any case that involved the death of looters, archaeologists, or law enforcement agents due to violence or intimidation (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

There can be violence or intimidation between *tombaroli*. Expert respondents claimed that among them there might be some fights but nothing serious. The brothers who excavate together, Giovanni and Patrizio, explained how once their team had to fight with another team of looters because they were making too much noise, thus putting all of them at risk of being detected. Beyond this instance, they never had to fight other looters (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). One of the Carabinieri interviewed, lieutenant Rodolfo, a member of the art squad who took care of the force's database of stolen items, narrated how a looter attacked the very famous *tombarolo*, Pietro Casasanta, because of a broken deal (Interview, Rome, 2017). Another famous *tombarolo*, Luigi Perticarari, in the book he co-wrote with journalist Anna Maria Giuntani (1986) explained that a member of his team denounced him because he thought Perticarari was having an affair with his wife. As prosecutor Bartolo stated in his interview, there are instances of small fights between *tombaroli*, and he has exploited the losing team in his investigations (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

The fourth of the voluntary criteria, the one related to the use of commercial structures, elicited the most unified response. An overwhelming majority of respondents agreed that *tombaroli* were able to create a simple commercial structure to sell their own findings. This commercial structure can take two forms. The simplest one is selling the material in what is labeled a “door-to-door” system. In this case, the *tombarolo* has established his fame and has a pool of clients, who go to his house and buy what he finds.

This is the case of retired *tombarolo* Giuseppe Evangelisti, whose earnings were discussed before; during the weekends, clients arrived to his house. These clients were upper class urban bourgeoisie, professionals such as doctors, architects, and lawyers. Sellers and buyers even became good friends, and word of mouth made the pool of clients grow larger. Even important middlemen such as Giacomo Medici eventually ended up visiting him and buying pieces, but Medici looked for more important pieces than Evangelisti could

find(Isman, 2009a). Carlo, the archaeologist working for the Italian Ministry of Culture commented that some *tombatori*, feeling very secure, took their findings and sold them in Rome to clients (Interview, Cerveteri, 2016). In both of these examples *tombatori* had their own clients and sold the goods themselves. On occasion these contacts can be exchanged among looters.

The second, more complex option is the usage of a middleman. This scenario occurs when looters do not have the resources to meet potential clients. Middlemen serve as a connection between *tombatori*; small antiquities dealers; the big players such as international antique dealers, who often have stores in big art hubs such as Paris, London, New York, Geneva, or Brussels; museums; and private collectors. In Italy, the three big middlemen have been Giacomo Medici, Gianfranco Becchina, and Giulio Savoca (who died in 1998); all of them were connected to *tombatori* and all of them were investigated for their dubious role behind their legitimate business façades. Medici and Becchina thrived during the period of the great raid of Italian antiquities. Although they were competitors, they divided their operation centers: Medici operated in northern Italy and Becchina in the south (Isman, 2009a).

The fifth criterion deals with the ability of *tombatori* to launder their money. Again, a majority of respondents thought that looters do not launder money. The most they can launder is the provenance of the found item. That is, they can claim that the object they have found has not been looted by inventing a string of previous acquisitions of the piece.

The closest a respondent came to providing an example of the involvement of *tombatori* with money laundering was the archaeologist Carlo's statement that in the decades of the sixties and seventies, land was so cheap that when looters sold pieces, they ended up using the money to buy a plot on which to build their houses. As he said, "Decades ago, terrains were cheap, so with the little money you made with two vases you bought the land,

and off they went to abusively build. I remember people: one, after selling some pottery, built his garage” (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

The sixth criterion deals with operations beyond national borders. Most expert respondents agreed that *tombaroli* do not operate outside Italy. In fact, nowadays, with the police operations against looting, this crime is more difficult to detect as it has gone local instead of international (Isman, 2009a). As Andrea and Luca put it, Italy is so rich with cultural heritage and with a market also sponsored by Italian customers that *tombaroli* do not need to go to other countries to excavate or to sell pieces (Interview, Rome, 2017).

The literature does not provide many accounts of *tombaroli* traveling abroad. One of the few examples of a traveling *tombarolo* is Luigi Perticarari, who traveled to Switzerland (curiously, with a female helper, one of the few instances of a *tombarola*) in order to sell his pieces there (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1987). Prosecutor Bartolo explained that famous *tombarolo* “Pietro Casasanta, who was a lone wolf, often went to Basel [Switzerland], and tried to make a name for himself, to steal Becchina’s [an antique dealer and famous *tombaroli* middleman] activity, but he was too small to succeed” (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

The commercial structure of even important *tombaroli* is too limited to succeed in more complex entrepreneurial ventures. Traveling to a neighboring country like Switzerland is easy for northern *tombaroli*, but there are not many cases of these travels. Roberto, the criminologist, mentioned that in instances where there might be an international client, the task of operating cross nationally is trusted to people who have a good knowledge of the art market, such as a middleman (Interview, Rome, 2017).

The final criterion required by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe is the exertion of influence over legitimate institutions. The majority of expert respondents agreed that *tombaroli* do not have the capacity to influence legitimate institutions, as they are simply inhabitants of rural areas. Some expert respondents dismissed

this scenario, claiming that while maybe other players in the supply chain could do so, a simple *tombarolo* could certainly not. In fact, none of the *tombaroli* acknowledged this point. There is no evidence in the existing literature of *tombaroli* involved in cases of corruption.

An interesting point confirmed by respondents, however, was how in the past, during the times of the great raid, as looting is perpetrated in rural areas, everybody knew who the looters were and turned a blind eye to them, mayors and other politicians included. Andrea and Luca, the archaeologist and expert who work together at the Ministry of Culture stated:

Maybe the mayor of that place knows perfectly well the past or present of these people, and while we say, ‘Well, I’m a bit worried because there is a site close to where that famous *tombarolo* lives,’ the mayor generally smiles and says ‘But no, he is a good person.’ Sometimes, they tend to justify it. In short, and luckily, there is no infiltration of *tombaroli* in city halls across Italy (Interview, Rome, 2017).

Some of these cases can be found in the literature: for example, Stille (1999) states how in Sicily

[Vincenzo Cammarata] [p]roudly conducted tours for foreign dignitaries, judges, prosecutors, and members of parliament; he also loaned pieces to at least three Sicilian exhibitions. He had recently taken steps to register his antiquities with local authorities and had begun making plans to create his own museum. Yet for many years no one seems to have questioned how a private individual with no stable profession was able to amass such a collection in a country where it is illegal to buy or sell any artifact that was dug up before 1909 (p. 61).

Indeed, other expert respondents confirmed that in the north of Italy they had found mayors and councilmen working either as *tombaroli* or in collaboration with them at the Italian town of Cerveteri. They dated this phenomenon to around the 1970s and 1980s, the heart of the period known as the great raid, when looting was rampant. In any case, no documentary evidence has been found of *tombaroli* exerting influence over legitimate institutions in recent years.

In sum, one of the mandatory criterion is missing: the commission of criminal acts involving punishment of prison for four years or more. Five of the optional criteria did not accurately describe the *tombaroli*. The next section examines yet another point of view: whether instead of being organized criminals, *tombaroli* criminals that need to organize.

3. *Tombaroli* as criminals that are organized

Finckenauer (2005) used four criteria in order to identify criminal organizations. These four items are criminal sophistication (this category relates to the degree to which criminals plan their offenses, so their skill and knowledge levels indicate how sophisticated their abilities are), structure (this category relates to the division of labor within the organization or group, so highly structured groups will be hierarchical and have defined roles for members where a boss doles out tasks to lower echelons), self-identification (members of the group or organization must actually see themselves as members of this group and commonly display signs of bonding such as uniform clothing, tattoos, or initiation rituals), and authority of reputation (an organization's ability to coerce people either through direct or implied threats relates to the group's sense of authority and reputation).

According to Finckenauer (2005), criminal organizations can be placed within a spectrum based on the traits shown in figure 9 below. Some of these traits repeat the criteria developed by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. For

instance, Finckenauer's item regarding reputation, relates to the usage of violence and/or means of intimidation in the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe criteria.

The selection of Finckenauer's (2005) theoretical framework for this project is justified because it captures the full spectrum of organized crime and provides a good explanation of why some phenomenon cannot be considered organized crime. As such, Finckenauer's (2005) point of view allows one to consider whether a certain criminal phenomenon is merely an instance of criminals who need to organize in order to commit their crime. Other apparently organized crime activities, such as internationally trafficked stolen cars (Clarke & Brown, 2003) or drug trafficking (Eck & Gersh, 2000; Natarajan & Belanger, 1998), are not always caused or even facilitated by organized criminals, but can instead be crimes that are merely organized around criminal opportunities (Clarke & Brown, 2003). In fact, this particular framework has been used in other studies attempting the same goals as the present research project, such as wildlife being trafficked in the neotropics (Pires, Schneider & Herrera, 2016).

Figure 10 charts the responses of the project's participants in relationship to the mentioned criteria.

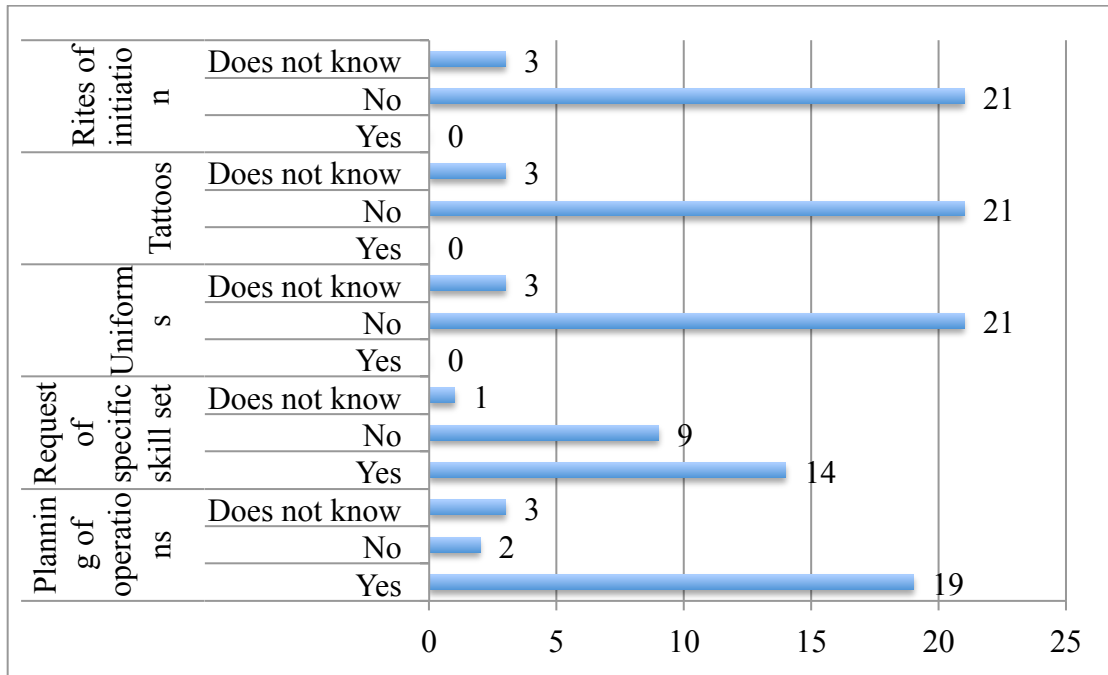


FIGURE 10: Opinion of respondents about the presence of Finckenauer's traits in *tombaroli* (N = 24).
 Source: the author

Three criteria can be easily grouped due to the uniformity of the interviewees' responses, with the items that produced the most unified responses being the usage of uniforms, sporting markers such as tattoos, and the fulfillment of rites of initiation. According to Finckenauer (2005), these items cluster around self-identification. As can be seen, practically all the expert respondents clearly denied *tombaroli* wearing any sort of uniform, getting tattoos, or going through a rite of initiation. Clearly, these elements are not related to the criminal conduct of *tombaroli*.

The two remaining criteria were less uniform. The first one referred to the planning of operations of *tombaroli*. A majority of respondents agreed that looters plan their activities, but as looting *per se* is not a complex task, it does not require complex planning. These planning operations, according to several expert respondents, follow a logical order: planning before digging, which mostly implies assessing where to excavate; probing the terrain in

order to find the tombs; assessing the type of tombs according to the area; excavating and selling the found items.

The literature provides a trove of accounts on how to prepare for a digging expedition. An expert *tombarolo* scouts the terrain to find spots where tombs might exist. With barrels of water, he humidifies the soil so it becomes softer and then with a *spillone*, a long metal rod in form of a spear, probes the terrain looking for stone (the tomb). After the tomb is located, the team of *tombaroli* gather in order to excavate the site (Bordo, 1987; Perticarari, 1986; Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992; among others).



FIGURE 11. A long *spillone*, the iron rod *tombaroli* use to probe the soil in search of tombs, abandoned at the necropolis of Cerveteri. Interviewed archaeologists explained that it was so long because the tombs closer to the surface had been looted during the previous decades, so now looters have to dig deeper.

Source: the author (2017)

Data obtained through interviews fit with the literature. Carlo, the archaeologist who works in the Italian Ministry of Culture stated, summarized the methods of excavation of *tombaroli*, which he had witnessed so many times:

First you probe and then you bring the team: imagine that you cannot find anything, what do you do, bring the team? It does not make any sense! The first step is with the skewer... If you have six hours, what do you do, you spend four hours searching and what if you cannot find anything? First, look around, find a spot, and then the next day, or two days later, you dig ... Let's say it's programmed that way (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

Of course, all these actions require a schedule. Alfredo, one of the retired *tombarolo*, stated that

Yes, I always tried to plan ahead where to dig. I used to unearth between seventy to one hundred tombs per year. When I spotted a tomb, then I usually planned to move digging to Saturday, so I could stay awake all night, as on Sunday I did not have to work and I could sleep after working the entire night, do you understand? They were only planned in this way, nothing more (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

The last of Finckenauer's (2005) criteria analyzed in this section refers to the requirement of a specific skill set for team members. Once again, the majority of respondents thought a *tombaroli* team had to possess a specific skill set. As will be seen in the next chapter, literature written by *tombaroli* highlights the importance of these skills. For example,

in the autobiography of Gismondo Tagliaferri (Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992), the *tombarolo* outlined the “Perfect characteristics to be a good looter” which includes the following:

1. The real looter must have a lot of knowledge of the countryside;
2. He must not be afraid of rain or cold;
3. He must be ready to sacrifice;
4. He must speak little of what he does;
5. He never must excavate the tomb without anyone carefully watching;
6. When he finds something interesting, he must take it home on foot; and
7. The real looter must have a heart of steel or otherwise when his colleagues shout, ‘escape, escape, the police is arriving’, if he does not have a heart of steel, he dies of fear inside the tomb (pp. 15-16).

Point number one is by far the most important skill for a *tombarolo*, since having the ability to read the terrain and interpret the signals that point towards a buried tomb is the starting point. In fact, one of the looters interviewed in this research project, Gennaro, confirmed how reading the terrain is quintessential (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017). In fact, this point was confirmed by another retired *tombarolo*, Alfredo. He also added the skill of knowing whether the tomb was intact or had been previously looted, in order to save time (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

Carla, the archaeologist from the National Council of Research, gave another example that her years of roaming the fields and cataloguing damaged sites had taught her was relevant:

I think that in Apulia they have a great knowledge of the type of terrain because they know exactly how to identify tombs, delimit the tomb, the perimeter of the tomb that is three or four meters below, so they have a knowledge of the type of ground. And

the same here in Lazio, I think they know the goods they can find very well, or at least those that they are interested in (Interview, Rome, 2017).

Some respondents thought that there is no need for the requirement of a specific skill set as they thought that everyone could loot. Some sources that trace the evolution of Italian looting refer to earlier times when everyone excavated. Eventually, these looters became addicted to archaeology, and people who had never read a book started studying rudimentary archaeology for themselves (Isman, 2009a; Iannizzotto, 2006). In any case, as the next chapter will prove, the composition of teams of looters is made up of a juxtaposition of skilled, seasoned *tombaroli* and others who are just helpers. As prosecutor Bartolo summarized:

The expert is the one able to find a tomb, or who can handle a metal detector, or who knows how to appreciate the economic, juridical and scientific value of a found piece. They are people whose tradition has been handed down from father to son, especially in these towns around Rome, for example. Then there is the hard working young man, who wants to earn fifty euros and works one day. He is the one who will use the hoe, the picket. Now they dig with bulldozers. Then the hard worker needs also to be skilled, right? Because if not he does more damage to the tomb. Because they need to be careful how they dig, in short! (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

In conclusion, when asked about Finckenauer's (2005) items, expert respondents have denied that *tombaroli* use subcultural markers like tattoos or uniforms. However, respondents acknowledged that *tombaroli* must plan their diggings and recruit team members who possess specific skills. The last section of results covers Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) framework

concerning organizational structure, which is applied to teams of *tomboroli*. The section provides the results of respondent's responses concerning this specific issue.

4. The organizational structure of *tomboroli*

The last element researched and reported in the present chapter refers to the organizational structure of *tomboroli*. The classifications of organizational structure used in this project follow Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) study of thirty-nine drug trafficking organizations prosecuted in the city of New York. These categories were adapted from previous classifications by Curtis (1996) and Johnson, Hamid and Sanabria (1992).

The classifications of organizational structure in Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) model are conceptualized as follows: the organization can adopt the form of freelance individuals (where there is no formal hierarchy or division of labor and there is no expectation for future transactions), a family business (where an informally defined division of labor may exist and the activity operates as a family operation), a communal business (where the division of labor is informal and flexible, but there is a clearly identified boss), or a corporation (where the division of labor is clearly defined according to a clearly defined formal structure, and a large number of individuals are involved).

Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) theoretical framework was selected because it both complements the previous frameworks by extending the analysis of the figure of the *tomborolo* into its structural organization, and it helps explain how looters learn by revealing how they are organized. This framework thus parallels Kenney's research (2007). The results presented and analyzed complement those presented and analyzed in chapter 5. Once again, this particular framework has been used, combined with Finckenauer's (2005), in other studies researching less common trafficked goods such as Pires, Schneider & Herrera's (2016) study in trafficked wildlife in the neotropics

The respondents were shown the different organizational options and were asked to think about them concerning the present looting scenarios in Italy. Because of the different geographical realities involved, the respondents could choose more than one option if they wanted to. Figure 12 summarizes their responses.

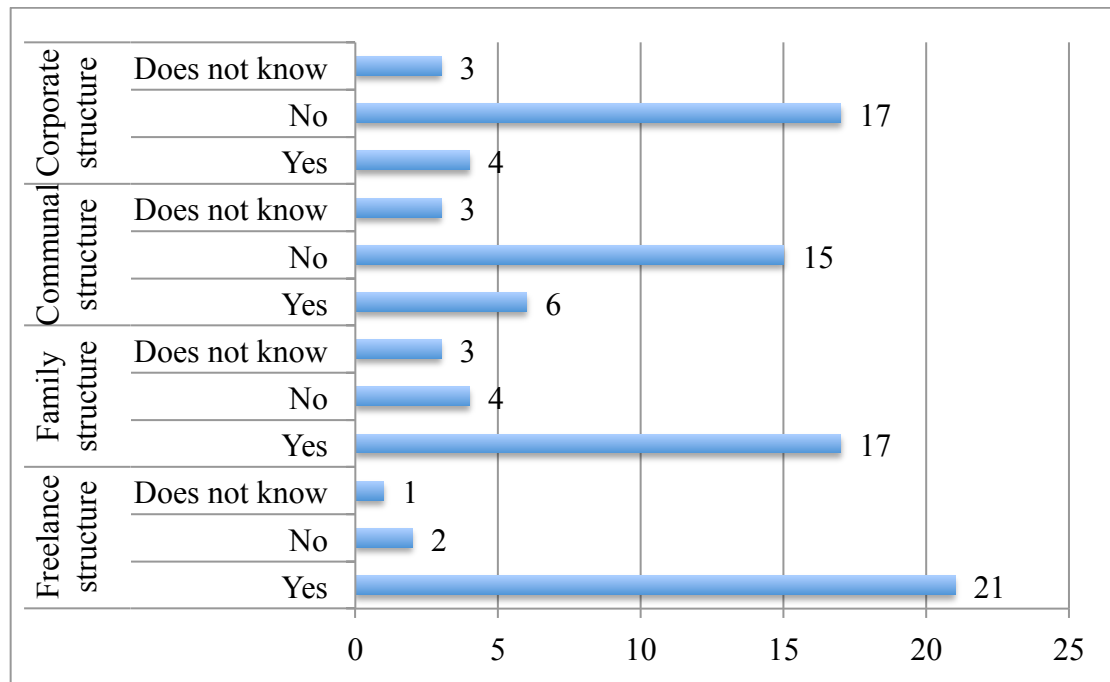


FIGURE 12: Opinion of respondents about the organizational structure of *tombaroli* (N = 24).

Source: the author

The organizational structure most identified by expert respondents was the freelance structure. According to many of the experts responded, this best describes the looting situation in the north of the country. In fact, literature abounds with cases of freelance *tombaroli*. A detailed one is given by Silver (1999) depicting the fascinating finding of the famous Euphronios *krater* in Cerveteri, the same that was eventually sold in 1972 to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City for \$1 million. As Silver (1999) states, Giuseppe Montrasto, a thirty-seven year-old *tombarolo* from the southern region of Calabria

led a group of three excavators along with two assistants who were to keep watch. As they were trespassing on private property, eventually Cerveteri native Giovanni Temperi discovered the team of looters, but joined them in exchange for a cut of whatever they found. Once a tomb was found, Montrasto enlisted three more men to do the heavy work.

Andrea and Luca defined the freelance organization when applied to *tombaroli*; it consists of small groups that are created to achieve a goal, which is unearthing a tomb that has valuable goods inside (Interview, Rome, 2017). In the case used as an example, a group of people was progressively assembled to manage to find , unearth, and empty a tomb and to then sell its contents. The same group never reassembled again, and the members kept entering and leaving teams as they needed.

After this group, the second most prevalent form of structuring the *tombaroli* teams was the familial structure. In many instances the expert interviewees thought that groups of *tombaroli* were mostly comprised of family members, so this structure, according to them, was also suited to define the reality of archaeological looting in Italy. Prosecutor Bartolo defined this particular structure as follows:

Yes, it is a family division: especially in small centers, such as Cerveteri. Families are like schools of *tombaroli*, and the teams are composed of uncles, cousins, and brothers, and also close acquaintances, too. This is what I have prosecuted the most (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

These families are locally based, which implies that most of the inhabitants in rural areas know who excavates and who does not. In any case, these families cannot be compared to organized crime families, led by crime bosses. In fact, there are many accounts. *Tombarolo* Omero Bordo (1986) explains how his grandfather and father used to find tombs, and how

even his mother knew about what he did and accepted it. Perticarari, another important *tombarolo*, explains how he used to work with his brother, until he tragically died in an accident inside a tomb, and people such as his wife or his barber also knew about his night activities as a looter (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1986). As a final example, Thoren van Velzen (1996) states how “In some places the role of chief tomb robber is remarkably stable and is passed on within the same family” (p. 112). The following chapter will also deal with the family as an important source of learning for a looter.

The communal structure was the third most designated by respondents. Although not all respondents thought that they had seen *tombaroli* operate following this structure, literature gives examples of this sort of structure. For instance, Thoden van Velzen (1996) stated that “Since the 1960s the situation [looting] has stabilized and in all former Etruscan cities illegal digging is an institutionalized part of community life” (p. 112). The same author adds, accounts of the looters’ exploits “...provide a unique insight into the relations between tomb robbers and the communities within which they operate” (p. 111).

Migliore (1991) gave a pertinent example in his ethnography of Sicilian tomb robbers and explained how in small Sicilian towns

The individuals who actively seek out buried treasure on archaeological sites share the sentiments of other rural Sicilians. Treasure hunting is viewed as a legitimate, although potentially dangerous, profession. The individuals who engage in this type of activity are ordinary members of the community; they have various economic, social, and kinship ties with other community members (p. 116).

Pietro Casasanta, the famous *tombarolo*, used this structure when he operated for sixty years in the north of Italy, in Anguilara Sabazia, near lake Braciano. He would work

with a fixed team of looters. For example, his long-life friend Carlo Alberto Chiozzi was the operator in charge of the bulldozer, and other close friends occupied similar positions as diggers within the team (Isman, 2009a).

Finally, four respondents out of twenty-four thought that in the South, the reality of looting there adapted better to corporate structures, the least mentioned of the four structural categories. They also noted, however, that they did not know that for sure, as they did not have firsthand experience there. As with the communal structure, this specific form of organization was typical of the period of the great raid. There is scant evidence of this structure, though, as the literature rarely describes it. Stille (1999) explains how Sicilian prosecutor Giuseppe Raffiotta "... uncovered a network of more than fifty *tombaroli* operating throughout southern Italy" (p. 63), which included "...two Sicilian university professors, the owner of a major auction house and two local businessmen – all of them prominent collectors" (p. 61).

All of the five *tombaroli*, depending on the characteristics of their teams, identified with one form of structure. In the second field trip to Cerveteri, Alessio described his group as consisting of freelancers (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017). Giovanni and Patrizio stated they had family members in their teams (in fact, readers will remember that these two *tombaroli* were brothers). Alfredo and Gennaro, the retired *tombaroli*, linked their experiences to a communal structure. None of them, however, thought their task to be fit for a corporate structure.

To conclude, results have shown that the structure of Italian archaeological looting varies across the country, adapting to several organizational structures that correspond to the theoretical framework used by Natarajan and Belanger (1992). Throughout Italy, examples can be found of every structural category in literature. When confronted with these categories, the expert respondents thought, the freelancers followed by the familial structures

were the most prevalent ones. The expert respondents thought that the communal and corporate structures were less common.

5. Interpretation of findings regarding the relationship between *tombaroli* and organized crime

The results garnered from the conducted interviews do not support the notion that organized crime is involved in archaeological looting in Italy. A solid link between traditional Italian organized crime and *tombaroli* has not been found. This result highlights the need to assess exactly how *tombaroli* do operate, without fashionable myths that romanticize and misconstrue reality.

The results point instead to the existence of a highly opportunistic crime that is largely taken advantage of by locals who do not appear to see their activity as criminal. Instead, they see their actions as ways to generate an extra, secondary income, as all of the *tombaroli* were employed. Their criminal activities provide them with the opportunity to meet basic living expenses, in a way that does not require a great deal of trouble or coordination of efforts.

5.1. The relationship between *tombaroli* and traditional Italian organized crime is anecdotal

The literature's evidence of the involvement of organized crime is ambiguous. Some authors thought that there was no involvement (Chappell & Polk, 2011), whereas others thought that there was (Melillo, 2008; Nistri, 2008). But there is much anecdotal evidence in the literature suggesting that organized crime benefits from the looting and subsequent trafficking of Italian archaeological heritage. The confluence of the relative ease in looting archaeological heritage and the profit margins obtained when selling pieces to preeminent collectors boosts

the idea of organized crime being involved in archaeological looting. Also, in recent years, both the media and members of the Italian criminal justice system furthered this idea by rashly attaching the label “organized” (Europol, 2011; Morelle, 2014).

This study’s findings, therefore, indicate that Italian archaeological looting is a crime that is organized rather than a crime that is perpetrated by organized crime. The simplicity of commercial structures employed nowadays by *tombaroli* (for example, transporting, selling, and delivering the pieces to the client without the use of a middleman) means that archeological looting cannot be related to Italian organized crime, which mostly refers to large-scale, stable, and structured organizations (Paoli, 2003). Italian organized crime exercises political dominion over their areas of influence, collects both lawful and unlawful debts, and regulates legal and illegal markets, among other tasks (Paoli, 2003). According to Sciarrone (2009), they also use of violence and intimidation in order to enter the legitimate economy and seek to control the territory (Sciarrone 2009). The nature of these criminal associations becomes confused when the term is used to describe smaller organized criminal groups with local significance (Paoli, 2003).

The only connection between the conception of Italian organized crime described by Paoli (2003) and Sciarrone (2009) and *tombaroli* is that looters might operate in territories which are controlled by organized crime groups. Even though interviewees mentioned most of the groups (Cosa Nostra, Camorra, ‘Ndrangheta, and Sacra Corona Unita), they primarily referred to Cosa Nostra and Camorra when discussing groups which controlled the territory and allowed looters to excavate. Experts discard the presence of ‘Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita as they remain outside this kind of illicit market. Cases where organized criminal groups have requested the services of *tombaroli* are anecdotal and do not have a significant evidence in the press and literature. In news stories that put forward these kind of theories, reporters merely imply that this form of looting is the product of organized crime

networks, linking Cosa Nostra, ‘Ndrangheta, Camorra, or the Sacra Corona Unita to the activities of *tombaroli*. However, these pieces of news are anecdotal, few in number, and the evidence given is very feeble, in the opinion of the expert respondents.

In recent years, the academic debate about organized crime’s influence on the illicit antiquities trade has been raging, even though most of the scholarly literature states that the involvement of organized crime is not the prevalent dimension of this particular phenomenon (see, for example, Alderman, 2012; Chappell, 2011; Dietzler, 2013; Mackenzie, 2011c; Tjihuis, 2006; Visconti, 2015).

Mackenzie (2011b) makes two points about the relationship between organized crime and looted antiquities. One, he claims that organized criminals are present in the market for looted antiquities as the market itself is structured through the rapport of different and interconnected actors (from looters or thieves to buyers) and these market transactions themselves violate the jurisdiction’s rules. Two, he uses the conventional notion of the term “organized crime” to mean professional criminal groups using violence and corruption to attain illegal profits. Mackenzie (2011b) concludes that even though in the illicit market of looted antiquities traditional organized crime groups can be found, they do not represent an indispensable element of this market yet. Therefore, eliminating organized crime would not be sufficient to reduce looting and the subsequent trafficking, .

In a previous study of the antiquities market from the demand point of view, Mackenzie (2005) found little empirical evidence of the presence of criminal organizations in the market. However, by taking the approach of Vander Beken (2004, 2005, 2007a, 2007b) and Albanese (1987, 1995, 2008), who use among other indicators the availability of the product, levels of corruption of the local government, and the nature of the demand of a particular good in order to assess the levels of risk of opportunities for the infiltration of

organized crime in legal markets, Mackenzie (2011b) concluded that the antiquities market is highly prone to this risk.

Chappell and Polk (2011) also shared this point of view. These authors, departing from the trial of dealer Giacomo Medici, stated that even though there was a clearly depicted organizational chain, the resemblance with traditional organized crime is problematic, given the intrinsic characteristics of this particular market. To begin with, selling antiquities, even when these are illicitly obtained, is legal: sold items have to be properly laundered, an action that clearly cannot be done with other illicit goods, such as narcotics, which remain illicit as there is not a legal market for them. A second element is that the elevated cost of the items sold in the market assures a wealthy clientele, and law enforcement efforts have rarely been directed towards clients in this type of market.

Proulx (2010) researched the opinions and perceptions of archaeologists regarding the level of involvement of organized crime in looting worldwide. Her research proved that archaeologists have an image of organized crime that is reduced to the cultural pattern of organizations similar to the Italian mafia, which clearly does not reflect the reality of looting. Manacorda (2011) acknowledge that even though the international trafficking of cultural heritage generally requires group action and important organized criminal groups pay attention to the art and antiquities market; however, the author still doubts that major criminal organizations typically traffic antiquities as they do drugs. In sum, academics mostly doubt that there is a strong tie between the illicit market of trafficked antiquities and organized crime (Campbell, 2013; Naylor, 1997, 2002).

Some other authors take opposing perspectives. Campbell (2013) describes the fluid, non-hierarchical traits of criminal organizations operating in the illicit trafficking of cultural goods. According to the author, there are networks that connect though provisory

interactions, a plurality of actors with different roles and degrees of specialization, occupying different positions along the chain.

Di Nicola and Savona (1998) likewise state that organized crime participates within the illegal sphere of the art world. As such, and according to these criminologists, organized crime can bring art and antiquities to collectors, act as the middleman between private collectors and professional thieves, obtain art and antiquities in connection with drug trafficking, deal stolen art and antiquities as a form of blackmailing third parties, and obtain art and antiquities as a form of money laundering.

On the international organizations front, as the United Nations has highlighted, the trafficking of illicit antiquities is also a problematic area. In 2008 the United Nations hosted in Italy a conference devoted to the topic, and their conclusions were not as clear-cut. The final conclusions were threefold: first, the involvement of organized crime in the illicit antiquities trade depends on what we mean by this term; second, that it does not appear to involve the Mafia; and third, that there is not enough information to determine the precise role of organized crime (Manacorda, 2008).

However, unlike the scholarly literature, international organizations tend to agree on the involvement of organized crime in trafficking cultural heritage. As early as 2004, the Economic and Social Council approved the Resolution 2004/34, on the Protection Against Trafficking in Cultural Property, which states that organized criminal groups are involved in trafficking in stolen cultural property (ECOSOC, 2004). The United Nations General Assembly also passed the resolution E/RES/2013/31, stating that this international organization was

... Alarmed at the growing involvement of organized criminal groups in all forms and aspects of trafficking in cultural property and related offenses, and observing that

cultural property is increasingly being sold through markets, including in auctions, in particular over the Internet, and that such property is being unlawfully excavated and illicitly exported or imported, with the facilitation of modern and sophisticated technologies (p. 5).

The UNTOC Conference of parties claimed that trafficking in cultural property has links to organized crime, as it relies on *modus operandi* used by organized criminal groups; it satisfies a strong demand and is thus highly lucrative for those participating in the trade; its complex nature often requires the involvement of many actors, including legal entities and third parties, who tend to operate in a structured and organized way; and it uses modern and sophisticated technologies. There is also evidence that transnational trafficking in antiquities is linked to other illicit activities in which organized criminal groups are involved, including drugs and arms smuggling, violence, corruption, and money laundering (Borgstede, 2014).

The United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) states that organized crime groups have become more deeply involved in the theft and export of illicit antiquities, among other forms of cultural property (Calvani, 2009). In any case, the debate of the involvement of organized crime in the art market, whether legal or illegal, is not yet over, and it will keep expanding as it includes not only traditional notions of organized crime but also more complex interpretations and resulting criminal policies (Natali, 2015).

Data obtained in the present research project support most of the literature in the field, as they do not allow for the conclusion that there is a solid relationship between organized crime and looters. At the same time, data collected also support the results obtained in the systematic literature review of the present dissertation, where only a few of the analyzed articles deemed traditional Italian organized crime to have an investment in the traffic of

illicitly obtained antiquities in Italy, opposed to the vast majority of articles, that did not deny or support any involvement between *tombaroli* and Italian organized crime.

The autobiographies of *tombaroli* echo the testimonies of the looters who agreed to be interviewed. For example, northern *tombarolo* Luigi Perticarari (1986) denied the existence of an *onorata organizzazione* in the north of Italy where he operated, yet he could not deny the involvement of organized crime in the south. Practically all *tombaroli* agreed with this statement. The same Perticarari (1986) added that he had knowledge that in the region of Campania one had to pay an organized crime boss in order to be able to dig. Organized crime's control of territory has, likewise, been stated by a great number of interviewees.

In sum, the results have not been able to determine a connection between *tombaroli* and traditional Italian organized crime groups. The analysis of the interviews of experts, the existing literature (including autobiographies of *tombaroli*), the Italian press, and the conclusions of working groups only enables us to conclude that this specific issue remains contested as much as the broader topic of the involvement of organized crime in the art world.

5.2. *Tombaroli* cannot be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria of the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe

Having discarded traditional Italian organized crime from the reality presented by the collected data, it is worth examining whether *tombaroli* could be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria of the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. In order to be labeled a criminal association, it is important to remember that these organs require that all the mandatory criteria and at least two of the optional ones have to be fulfilled. According to data gathered in this study, *tombaroli* cannot be labeled organized criminals due to the fact that one of the mandatory criteria, the suspicion of committing

serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty, does not apply.

The first mandatory criterion *tombaroli* fulfill refers to the collaboration between more than two people. This collaboration exists due to the very requirements of archaeological looting and the subsequent placement of the product. Looting is not a task that can be done by one person. The results indicated how roles are divided: one individual knows the terrain well and scouts zones, a team excavates the tomb and, in some instances, if looters do not know how to sell the looted antiquity, they use middlemen.

The second mandatory criterion, a criminal activity extending over a prolonged or indefinite period, also applies to the *tombarolo*. Looting is committed either as long as their energies allow it or as long as looters have a faithful clientele. However, it seems that there is a generational shift that will be analyzed in the next chapter. Younger generations do not feel the passion for archaeology or see the attraction physically excavating a tomb.

The criterion that does not allow labeling *tombaroli* as organized criminals is the third: the suspicion of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty. As some of the experts stated, some prosecutions aim towards the usage of article 416 with *tombaroli*, but this article has an important shortcoming: for organizations whose structure is family-based, familial ties result in problematic convictions because it is difficult to establish that a family of *tombaroli* is an organization.

Even though tomb raising has been a very common crime in recent decades, legislators seem uninterested in protecting archaeological heritage. The low penalty attached to the crime leads *tombaroli* to perceive themselves as non-criminals. All the *tombaroli* who were interviewed for this project do not see the activity in which they engage as criminal. *Tombaroli* claimed that looting for them is a way of living that is strongly tied to both their

ancient roots and the land where they have lived since they were born. In fact, *tombaroli* think of themselves as descendants of the Etruscan civilization, as a way of justifying ancient Etruscan items belong to them as their living heirs. In sum, they see their criminal activity either as a job or a hobby.

Also, Italian *tombaroli* are passers-by in the Italian criminal justice system. Both elements, *tombaroli* not seeing themselves criminals, and their sporadic presence in the criminal justice system, weaken the preventive capacity of law enforcement. They also, however, weaken the culture of protecting the territory and the archaeological heritage it might contain, which is by no means an infinite resource. The latter can be seen in the justificatory rhetoric of *tombaroli*, who think that they benefit from whatever archaeological items “their” land has underneath. Even though they know that archaeological heritage pertains to the state, the fact that they see it as their property threatens the communal sphere of cultural heritage.

The fourth mandatory criterion that can be observed in *tombaroli* is the goal of profit and/or power. Looters do their work mostly to obtain economic profit. However, it must be noted that in the market, *tombaroli* are weak players. There are three reasons for this: the fragmentation of the territory which produces the high level of competition among the *tombaroli* (because they cannot claim the land as their property the tombs can be looted by other teams of *tombaroli*); the vital importance of clients, who are badly needed in order to make a profit; and the lack of power of *tombaroli* within the art market.

This last issue is an important point that is both raised by the interviewees and highlighted in the literature: if a dealer acts as a middleman to connect a client with *tombaroli*, the looter will not get as much money as the dealer. Dealers who regularly purchased items from *tombaroli* would pay them less than 10% of the price of the item (Isman, 2009a; Watson & Todeschini, 2007). Silver (2009) refers to how

... News of the million-dollar sale [the sale of the Euphronios krater to the Metropolitan Museum of art in New York City in November 12, 1972, for the amount of \$1 million] started to trickle back to Cerveteri, where the underpaid tomb robbers began to think they were the ones who had been ripped off (p. 75).

Still, some *tombaroli* managed to live very well out of their activities, as they explained in their autobiographies (Bordo, 1987; Perticarari, 1986).

The lack of presence of the third mandatory criterion precludes further consideration of whether *tombaroli* can be labeled organized criminals. They simply cannot be. However, if this criterion were met, *tombaroli* could be labeled organized criminals because out of seven optional criteria, two of these appear in Italian looters, thus fulfilling the (now inapplicable) second condition. The two mandatory criteria that can be confirmed are the first, the specialized division of labor, and the fourth, the usage of business-like structures.

The specialized division of labor of *tombaroli* is eminently horizontal as it lacks, when compared to other criminal activities, stratification. There are not many roles with diverse expertise. Concerning role and rapport, *tombaroli* are few in numbers. Still, they have certain facets that one *tombarolo* might have and another not: knowledge about archaeology, who to approach as a middleman if one is needed, and how to not harm the piece when using damaging excavating techniques. In relation to the usage of commercial structures, it is important to mention the relationship of looters with antique dealers, who dictate their needs to *tombaroli* so they can manage to find these. The knowledge of dealers about the market (which type of pieces are in high demand or the prices that these pieces might have) is superior to that of the looters, as *tombaroli* only serve particular clients with whom they have a longstanding rapport.

The use of measures of discipline and control and the use of violence or other means of intimidation is rare. The decades of the great archaeological raid perpetrated by *tombaroli* saw groups of looters working non-stop in the richest sites. It therefore implied the use of violence in order to control areas that could result in great economic benefits. However, this instrumental violence never translated into a code of honor of *tombaroli*. Thus, this violence, linked to the control of the territory, is linearly functional to the very looting of the site and the protection of possible assets.

It is uncommon for *tombaroli* leave their geographic area, so they do not operate cross-nationally. They are not able to trafficking antiquities abroad, both because they lack of means and because they could be easily compromised. Therefore, if their client is abroad, it indicates a relationship with middlemen and antique dealers who have traffickers, as the Medici affair or the case against Gianfranco Becchina (both antique dealers with paid *tombaroli* at their disposition) proved.

It is also interesting to point out the presence of foreigners who become *tombaroli* who have previously emigrated from countries such as Romania, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Moldova, Serbia and Montenegro, to name a few. These migrants are used to certain levels of mobility, know rural areas well, and absorb looting as a criminal activity. Since these activities are physically taxing (the same phenomenon can be observed with the so called “ortomafia”, devoted to horticultural goods, which also implies a great deal of physical effort) they are employed as cheap labor. Many interviewees confirmed this point, and *tombaroli* do not see these immigrants as real looters but mere helpers. Bell (1964) and later Ianni (1974) referred to crime as a queer ladder of social mobility. According to this construct, an entering immigrant group experiences strain and some members react by innovating in accord with a tradition established by prior entrepreneurs. It will be interesting to research this case of ethnic succession in the field of archaeological looting and see

whether these immigrant *tomboroli* experience success in their criminal activities (Abadinsky, 2010). In fact, Paoli and Reuter (2008) stated that both blocked opportunities and the queer ladder may explain participation in organized crime by members of the immigrant community in Europe. Finally, *tomboroli* do not have the ability to influence legitimate institutions, nor is there enough profit involved to require the use of money laundering techniques.

In conclusion, *tomboroli* cannot be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria issued by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. The only missing factor is the suspicion of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty. The penalties attached to looting in Italy are weak, never exceeding the required four years of imprisonment. The fact that one of the four mandatory criteria does not apply to *tomboroli* precludes the possibility of labeling looters as organized criminals.

5.3. *Tomboroli* can be labeled criminals that need organization in order to loot

Having analyzed up to this point the relationship between *tomboroli* and traditional organized crime, and whether looters can be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria of the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe, it is time to add, in a logical order, Finckenauer's (2005) and Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) frameworks to determine whether *tomboroli* can be labeled criminals that require organization in order to commit their crimes.

The four dimensions that help define organized crime according to Finckenauer (2005) are criminal sophistication, structure, self-identification, and reputation. Natarajan and Belanger (1998) utilize a two dimensional framework that explores organized crime by examining the level of organization and the types of tasks involved in the crime. The

combination of these two theoretical frameworks along with the data gathered in this dissertation further supports the idea that *tombaroli* are criminals that organize themselves in order to loot, instead of organized criminals.

According to Finckenauer (2005), organized crime deals with activities that require some type of sophistication, which can be measured by the planning involved, special technical skills or knowledge, and the longevity of criminal ventures. Archaeological looting does not require that much sophistication on behalf of the participants. Data so far have indicated that looters in Italy seem to possess little criminal sophistication and no complex organizational structure. In the zone where fieldwork was conducted, looting is a common activity, involving common people who lived in towns nearby the archaeological areas. They constitute a loosely affiliated network of criminals who coalesce around certain criminal opportunities, in the words of Finckenauer (2005).

Respondents agreed that the most important piece of knowledge involved successfully spotting signs that indicate unearthed tombs. Their responses also indicated that there was little planning. Once the difficult part of finding where a tomb lies is completed, excavating it is a simple task, albeit a physically difficult one. Some of the respondents referred to using metal detectors, or more aggressive excavating modes, such as bulldozers, to be faster and reduce their efforts. It is a given that neither of these methods requires a great deal of special technical skills, knowledge, or overall sophistication. In sum, there is a small amount of planning, but it lacks the strategic dimension characteristic of criminal organizations.

The reputation of *tombaroli* is based on factors such as the quality of their end product or their timeliness in delivering. There was no indication in any responses that fear or intimidation was utilized as a way to force purchases on customers or that reputation was used to instill fear in other competing groups. The reputation of *tombaroli* is heavily linked to

standards of quality in the pieces looters find. For example, the products they provide must meet the consumer's demands; doing otherwise would jeopardize their extra income.

There are no cultural or subcultural elements present in the sphere of *tombaroli*. Looters have no need to use identifying traits such as tattoos, initiation rites, or uniforms. This is yet another trait that highlights the role of *tombaroli* as criminals who need to organize instead of organized criminals. This trait coincides with the literature in the field and also with the opinions of other *tombaroli* who published their exploits. Antonio Induno, for example, stated that they had a code of honor based on loyalty, which could eventually result, if broken, in retaliation in the form of anonymous calls to the Carabinieri (Ruiz, 2000).

Two of the most agreed upon organizational structures established by Natarajan and Belanger (1998), freelance and family business, imply loosely affiliated networks of people involved in a criminal opportunity. Because the vast majority of respondents see *tombaroli* as freelance operators, there appears to be no formal organization amongst those looting Italian archaeological heritage. In other words, *tombaroli* see themselves as independent contractors.

Freelance operators have no division of labor as they perform the requisite tasks related to looting, such as spotting the terrain, digging, appraising the goods, and selling them. Because the work of *tombaroli* requires no significant leaders and has no need for a formal division of labor or structure, freelance operators would fall outside the definition of organized crime, according to Finckenauer (2005). Data demonstrate that family ties do not seem to play an important role in archaeological looting beyond teaching sons and grandsons the ropes of becoming a *tombarolo*. Families that work together to actively loot and sell archaeological findings also have an informal division of labor and also do not appear to have an identified leader. Furthermore, these families do not have a structure. Like the independent operators, family partners do not meet Finckenauer's (2005) definition of organized crime.

In sum, even though the relationship between *tombaroli* and traditional Italian organized crime has not been substantiated, and while looters cannot be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria of the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe, data indicates that *tombaroli* can be labeled criminals that need to organize in opposition to organized criminals. This assumption is based upon the lack of definitional traits of organized crime established by Finckenauer (2005) and the adopted organizational structure of *tombaroli*, according to Natarajan & Belanger (1998). The combination of both frameworks confirms this conclusion.

6. Conclusions

The chapter began by discussing journalists' desire to connect organized crime and cultural heritage crime. It has revealed how, at best, those reports were misleading. Yes, organized crime might be interested in cultural heritage, but not in looting archaeological items.

As seen in the systematic literature review, the field of Italian archaeological looting lacks innovative research, particularly criminological research. Though qualitative research is uncommon, it is necessary to reveal the involved participants and circumvent the lack of statistical data. The results from this chapter indicate that although Italian archaeological looting is a crime that is organized, it is not a problem of organized crime. In fact, its relationship to traditional Italian criminal organizations seems sporadic and anecdotal at best.

Expert respondents who are closely connected to the Italian criminal justice system revealed that although investigations have often demonstrated a link between mafia organizations and *tombaroli* regarding both the monitoring of the territory and the selection of objectives, no proof has ever been found of an involvement of mafia-type organizations in the direct and continuing organization of the activities related to the traffic of cultural

artifacts. Though in some instances there has been an involvement of individuals affiliated with local mafia-type clans in archaeological looting, this involvement still is anecdotal.

Tombaroli are “organized” in the sense that they need to create teams whose task is to loot and then find sellers for the found items. Though these teams coordinate their activities, this does not necessarily denote the involvement of “traditional” criminal associations and even less so the presence of the mafia.

Furthermore, *tombaroli* cannot be labeled organized criminals according to both mandatory and optional parameters designed by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe, as they do not fulfill the requirements stated by these organisms. It is important to highlight the problem of the weak punishments for this form of crime, even though law enforcement is actively attempting to curb this phenomenon. Because the penalties are so low, ordinary townspeople are not afraid of illicitly taking archaeological goods that belong to the state in order to sell them to their own clients.

Applying Finckenauer’s (2005) criteria also did not result in *tombaroli* being categorized as organized criminals, as they lack the sophistication, structure, and self-identification possessed by true organized criminals. Also, applying Natarajan and Belanger’s (1998) organizational structures to the looters does not sustain the notion that *tombaroli* are organized criminals. The fact that *tombaroli* organize mostly as groups of freelancers or family members supports the idea that looters should not be labeled organized criminals.

The myth of the *Mafioso* trafficking with archaeological heritage has been dispelled. It is time to turn the attention in the next chapter to the issue of how *tombaroli* organize, learn, and adapt to both new challenges that they encounter in their task and to law enforcement activities that disrupt looting.

CHAPTER 5

COME SONO DIVENTATO “IL MAGO”:⁵ LEARNING TO BE A *TOMBAROLO*, AND ADAPTING TO STAY IN THE BUSINESS

I've got a couple of teachers, older than me, and for good or bad I learnt from them. But now, there is no generational replacement, do you understand? That is my experience: when I stopped, I did not pass it on to anyone ... Even the guys who were with me, they also stopped without having a successor.

(Interview, Montefiascone, 2017)

Well-known *tombarolo* Omero Bordo (1987) explained in his biography that when he was a little child, during one of the cold winter days after WWII, he decided to build a fire pit. His father, a farmer, scolded him for the temerity. As a punishment, he left his son for one entire night in the middle of the Italian fields. As night fell, he tried in vain to seek refuge under a tree. Omero was sure he would die from exposure to the cold wind blowing. As he could see the moon rising, he claims that

I thought about all the dark ghosts, invisible and silent, but present everywhere, of people that have lived in that land. And, as if a superior power were driving me, I thought about the Etruscans. And those bloody figures painted on the walls of the tombs occasionally found by my grandfather and my father came alive (pp. 14-15).

The images in the tombs that called upon Omero were made by the Etruscans, also known as Tyrsenoi or Tyrrheni, who were both historically and artistically the most important of the

⁵ How I became “the magician.”

indigenous peoples of pre-Roman Italy. Archaeological remnants of them have been found from the Alps to the gulf of Salerno (Hornblower & Spawforth, 2003). According to Bordo's story, the images made by the Etruscans in the tombs "ordered" him to discover them. Some chambers in tombs have presented the largest collections of pre-Roman painting in the classical world; they involve highly naturalistic depictions of banquets, games, hunting, and other cheerful scenes (Hornblower & Spawforth, 2003). According to Bordo, that night, a looter was born.

While Omero's ghost story may be exciting, and though it may be true that *tombaroli* enjoy seeing themselves as descendants of the Etruscans, the question remains: how does a person decide to become a looter? How does a person learn to read the terrain? How does a looter learn how to interpret a tomb? In order to answer these questions, this chapter integrates once again both relevant findings from research conducted in Italy and the existing literature. As in the previous chapter, appendix B provides the reader with a detailed list of all those who have participated in the present research project and who appear in this chapter.

1. How *tombaroli* get organized

The previous chapter assessed whether *tombaroli* fit the traditional understanding of organized criminals; it also applied Natarajan and Belanger (1998)'s typology of organizational structures to determine which structures they adopt in order to loot. The present chapter takes a deeper look at the topic discussed in the last chapter, providing a more detailed image of the organization of *tombaroli*. As the literature demonstrates, the way *tombaroli* organize directly impacts how they learning and adapt to adversities, whether these originate in the actions of law enforcement or not (Kenney, 2007). As chapter 2 noted, the extant literature does not provide any detailed, empirical analysis of the organization of looters. Following Michael Kenney's (2002, 2006, 2007) research project based on the

organizational learning of narcos and terrorist groups, three descriptive items have been adopted. As such, this section will examine the issues of looting in groups versus looting alone, recruitment, and hierarchy.

1.1. Looting in groups *versus* alone

When Hamblin (1970) interviewed a Sicilian *tombarolo* she nicknamed Pepe for her book entitled *Pots and Robbers*, he claimed that he worked alone. When asked by the journalist whether he would ever stop being a *tombarolo*, he answered that he would never stop, as he loved digging and finding tombs too much. Even though he did not make much money from what he found, as he had to pay fines when he got caught and bribe guards, Pepe happily claimed he could not stop. He was, in modern day terminology, a lone wolf looter. His way of working, all by himself, is very different to the many instances of *tombaroli* who claim to work in teams. The first step in this description of the organization of looters is to assess whether looting is predominantly a group or an individual activity.

An overwhelming majority of the expert respondents thought tomb raiding to be a group activity. Expert respondents claimed that unearthing a tomb requires great physical effort (some of the tombs can be located more than six meters below ground), good time management (being quick is essential when looting a tomb), and someone watching for intruders, among other factors. Therefore, teams of *tombaroli* can loot better than individuals.

Carlo, the archaeologist and guide in the second field trip, explained how looters need an entire group in order to excavate a tomb. In fact, he proved his point while standing in front of a tomb excavated by looters, in order to highlight the tremendous effort:

So if there is a tomb, there is a team: fewer people are better off because they talk less, but it depends on the tomb. They know if they need three men or five men to dig a particular tomb. For certain ones, I think they have not enrolled less than eight people. I am not bullshitting you, I have pictures. The holes were from seven to eight meters deep. To make a hole this way in one day, takes at least seven, eight people. Minimum. So, it depends on how much digging you have to do and so the team organizes it according to the excavation (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

In fact, during the first field research, also in Cerveteri, Angelo, the retired *tombarolo*, claimed that some of the *tombaroli* he knew had occasionally worked alone, yet eventually they thought it to be inconvenient and either joined or created a team.

In these groups the oldest or the most expert member acts as the leader of the group, and the rest are thought to be brute force. Back in Rome, prosecutor Bartolo stated:

Practicality: they are chosen for their strength, to facilitate work. A group needs an expert but also the strong guy who will excavate. And that's it. The expert understands the direction of the tomb and how it is arranged, the value of the tomb's content; the others use their muscles to dig, and the tools they have available. The objective is to obtain as many objects as possible in the shortest possible time (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

In sum, to be done properly and efficiently, looting must be done in a group. *Tombaroli* who operate all by themselves are not as efficient as a team. Yet, if the task is done by a group of *tombaroli*, it raises yet another interesting question: who, eventually, ends up being a member of a team of looters? And how is the recruitment of team members done?

1.2. Recruitment processes

Omero Bordo, the *tombarolo* who decided to become a looter because of the supernatural light he saw when his father abandoned him in the middle of the fields, had a team of looters at his disposition (Cecchelin, 1987). Giuseppe Perticarari worked with family and friends (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1986). Tagliaferri had a cadre of people he knew from his town (Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992). The list of important *tombaroli* could go on and on. Some of these *tombaroli* decided to register their experiences as looters in (auto)biographies, but they never directly explained how they formed their teams.

Once again, a majority of expert respondents stated that there is no such thing as recruiting new members. Moreover, expert respondents described the process of joining a group of looters as something spontaneous in such a casual setting as in the town's main bar, where everybody eventually converges. Lieutenant Rodolfo, from the Carabinieri's art squad, who took care of the force's database of stolen items, gave a description of the recruitment processes of *tombaroli* that he observed throughout his career, stating that,

It may happen that they are looking for boys who are willing to work for them, like smuggling cigarettes in the 1970s. In Naples, the smugglers went to the bars to look for boys to make cigarette trips for a few hundred thousand lire. They [*tombaroli*] can find volunteers anywhere, but usually they are always very closed groups because when they are going to sell, they do not want many associates and do not want there to be people who know they excavated a tomb. It is very simple (Interview, Rome, 2017).

The lack of a recruitment process is no substitute for trust; in fact, trust is very important in admitting new members into a team of looters. Back in Cerveteri, Carlo, the

interviewed archaeologist who took me on a tour of the necropolis of Cerveteri during the second field trip, added to the art squad police agent's description by talking about the importance of trust:

Certainly, of course, there is the need for trust, when recruiting. Of course, you cannot find anyone in the street and say, "Come dig up a tomb with me." Then, many times there are kinship relationships. I mean, that is how it works in a small village where everyone knows each other (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

Because of trust issues, looters usually integrate family members or friends into their teams. These new *tombaroli* have grown up with looters in the same town and thus they are good assets, as they know the surrounding areas where tombs are. However, some expert respondents also mentioned two groups of people who might be recruited and admitted into the team even though *tombaroli* do not know them personally.

The first group is the owners of terrain where looters excavate. Some looters contact them, as they consider it better to have them on board in their illicit diggings and share with them their profits, rather than risking these owners denouncing them to the police for damaging their fields. As Alfredo, one of the two retired *tombaroli* who were interviewed for this research project, stated, "In the end, we used to enroll the landowner in the team, but for convenience. Having a landowner agreeing with us allowed us to handle it [excavating in search of the tomb] differently; it was more convenient for us" (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Readers will remember from chapter four that while the team of looters led by Giuseppe Montrasto were illicitly excavating in the terrains of a landowner, Giovanni Temperi, the owner's watchman, discovered the team of looters, yet decided to join them in exchange for some money (Silver, 1999). The second group is immigrants from Eastern

European countries: some *tombaroli* pay them small amounts of cash (an interviewed *tombarolo* mentioned €50 per night [\$58]) in order to do the physically challenging task of digging (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017). This chapter will consider further the figure of the Eastern European *tombarolo*.

Finally, minors can be part of a team, as two interviews uncovered. Andrea and Luca, from the Italian Ministry of Culture stated,

There were the little boys who were going to the tombs, along with older *tombaroli*, obviously. Several times I had to go and testify in a juvenile court because there were little boys who had been taken by their father to the grave and were arrested (Interview, Rome, 2017).

Certainly, this is an issue that demands further research, as there is a complete void of analysis of their role in the literature.

To conclude, recruitment among *tombaroli* can only be described as informal, occurring in bars and common spaces shared by small town inhabitants or within a familial context. The main foundation is trust; thus members of the group know the new recruits. The only exceptions are owners of terrains and migrants who work digging for a small salary. The last organizational element to assess is whether the groups are arranged hierarchically or whether each member shares the same position. Is there a hierarchy in the groups of *tombaroli*? Who issues orders? And what happens if orders are not followed?

1.3. Hierarchy issues

The existing literature is unclear about hierarchies inside teams of looters. Because most of the literature consists of narration of cases, the books and articles dealing with Italian

archaeological looting tend to name the important *tombarolo* who would head the group and identify how many men he would employ. However, these accounts rarely depict the hierarchical dynamics in these groups.

The majority of the expert respondents thought that there is some sort of hierarchy operating within groups of looters. This hierarchy has only one level: one member occupies a higher position within the team of *tombaroli*, dictated by mostly being the older member and possessing valuable experience and knowledge (such as recognizing a piece by the period it was crafted, or its style, or the artist who produced it, for example). Other valued traits appear to be charisma and strength. For example, noted *tombarolo* Luigi Perticarari (1986) explained how, due to his fame, in his team he was only in charge of probing the terrain, while the rest of the team, would watch, excavate and, in his own words, “do the hard tasks” (p. 35). At the same time, he considered himself responsible for the entire team, and so, for example, when they rested after unearthing the tomb, he would stay awake and watched for them.

Other expert respondents thought that there is no hierarchy whatsoever dividing the different looters that make up a team. Four of the interviewed *tombaroli* stated that in their respective groups there was absolute equality between members. For example, a couple of active *tombaroli*, Giovanni and Patrizio, explained that in their group every member was an equal, be they stronger or weaker (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). Gismondo Tagliaferri, the retired *tombarolo* who published a book about his experience as a *tombarolo* along Luisa Rupi Paci (1992) explained that, as he was tired of working by himself, he formed a team of four; however, Tagliaferri does not explain how he did this. The *tombarolo* was nicknamed “red cricket” (*grillo rosso*), even though he adds “... not because I wanted to be the boss, but because it was a name I already had and so I decided to keep it” (p. 14).

Alfredo, the retired *tombarolo* who lived and operated in the area surrounding Lake Bolsena, stated that

No hierarchy, I was like the others. Of course, a final decision was mine to make, but nothing beyond if we were digging at that point or not, understand? Let's say that the decision on where to open a hole was up to me. But then, in the end, I was like the others: I took the same money (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

It is worth noting that, in this specific example, Alfredo recalls that a final decision was his to make, denoting a preeminent role over the rest of the looters, which indicates, alongside the fact that he was the most experienced member in the group, a certain position of power. In any case, even though most of the expert respondents thought that there is a more experienced looter acting as a boss, evidence cannot discard that there could be groups where all the members work as equals.

However, do orders exist in a context where the hierarchy is not complex? As can be seen, half of the expert respondents thought that there were no orders being issued. Expert respondents do not refer to orders but to counsels (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017), coordination (Tristano, e-mail communication, May 19, 2017), procedures (Interview, Rome, 2017), suggestions (Interview, Rome, 2017), or the act of sharing knowledge (Interview, Rome, 2017).

In the second field trip, Carlo, the archaeologist working for the Ministry of Culture introduced three more of his colleagues: Lucia, Leonardo, and Angelo. All of them worked in the necropolis under the aegis of a non-profit organization, named NUCLEO ARCHAEOLOGICO ANTICA CAERE Onlus, founded with the intention of educating locals and other Italian nationals about the area's Etruscan past, while performing tasks of maintenance, periodic cleaning, and valorization of these exceptional archeological areas.

After a morning of hard work under the sun, interviews were conducted during lunchtime. There, Carlo and the three archeologists working for the NUCLEO

ARCHAEOLOGICO ANTICA CAERE Onlus explained how in this line of work it is very normal to encounter illicit diggings being performed. Two of the archaeologists, Leonardo and Angelo, talked about how older, more experienced looters might have an ultimate decision-making capacity as to what team members should do. They coordinate the work of the rest of the *tombaroli* in the group. In the words of both Leonardo and Angelo:

- They do not issue orders. It's just a tip they share with the other members.

- Well, yes, they say: "dig here, dig here."

- "Dig here, it is a better spot, look, I'm sure you can find it here, it's easier to get in."

I think those who have more experience are listened to only because of the experience they have, understood?

- But then, I saw them at work. They come to us during an excavation and there is always an old *tombarolo*, or two or three, looking at us and then, like the elderly worker, eh, at a construction site, they say to us "But look there, there," (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

In fact, while conducting fieldwork with all of them in the morning, it was observed how the archaeologists found an exceptionally small perfume vase. The size of the vase meant that the recovery task took up some hours of the morning. At the same time, as the archaeologists could see that it was a painted vase (it depicted some sort of sportive competition), their shouts of joy were heard around the area.



FIGURE 13. Archaeologists of a non-profit organization, NUCLEO ARCHAEOLOGICO ANTICA CAERE Onlus, founded with the intention of educating locals and other Italian nationals about the area's Etruscan past of the, found this Etruscan perfume bottle with images of athletes competing.

Source: the author (2017)

These shouts attracted the attention of eventually two old *tombaroli* (after interviewing five of them, some living in the area), who separately approached the team of archaeologists and tried to give directions on how to operate, as if the archaeologists were members of the *tombaroli*'s teams. The rapport with the team of archaeologists and each *tombarolo* was amicable, as the archaeologists also were from the town and knew them. In any case, they let the *tombaroli* speak and kept working, barely acknowledging their presence and their orders.

The lack of orders does not imply, however, that there are no consequences for unruly *tombaroli*. Whether labeled counsels, coordination, or suggestions, these have to be followed, or the future of an unruly looter might be at stake. If a *tombarolo* is thought to be problematic, the chances of being asked to excavate once again diminish. Bartolo, the prosecutor, stated that

It is clear that if there is a quarrel, if they do not respect certain situations, then that person is no longer called in the future, in short. And I also had episodes in which the person who hadn't been called became an informant. It's all about internal dynamics. It is a very vindictive and at the same time collaborative environment (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

In sum, the literature is unclear about the existence of hierarchies within groups of *tombaroli*. It seems from the results obtained in this research project that the predominant point of view is that generally in groups of *tombaroli* there is one looter who is older and more experienced and has a higher status than the others. However, some of the expert respondents interviewed also point towards groups where all the members are considered equals. Orders are not an important part of the task of *tombaroli*. In fact, instead of orders counsels and suggestions of what to do when looting a tomb are given. Looters who do not cooperate while at work might be dismissed in future diggings.

2. The learning of *tombaroli*

The previous section has elaborated on how *tombaroli* are organized and function internally. Now it is time to examine how looters learn to perform their tasks. Following the theoretical framework of organizational learning, and similar research in this field, results presented in

this section address three specific issues related to learning: the sources where *tombaroli* learn; the type of knowledge learnt, classified as *metis* and/or *techné*; and the recording, storage, and frequency of access to information. It is time to ask who is teaching all these *tombaroli* to loot.

2.1. Sources of learning

When asked about who teaches *tombaroli* to loot, expert respondents mostly indicated as sources either family members, older looters, a friend or, in fewer instances, cases where the *tombarolo* learns how to loot by himself. In several responses, more than one source was indicated. The following chart summarizes the prevalence of every possible response.

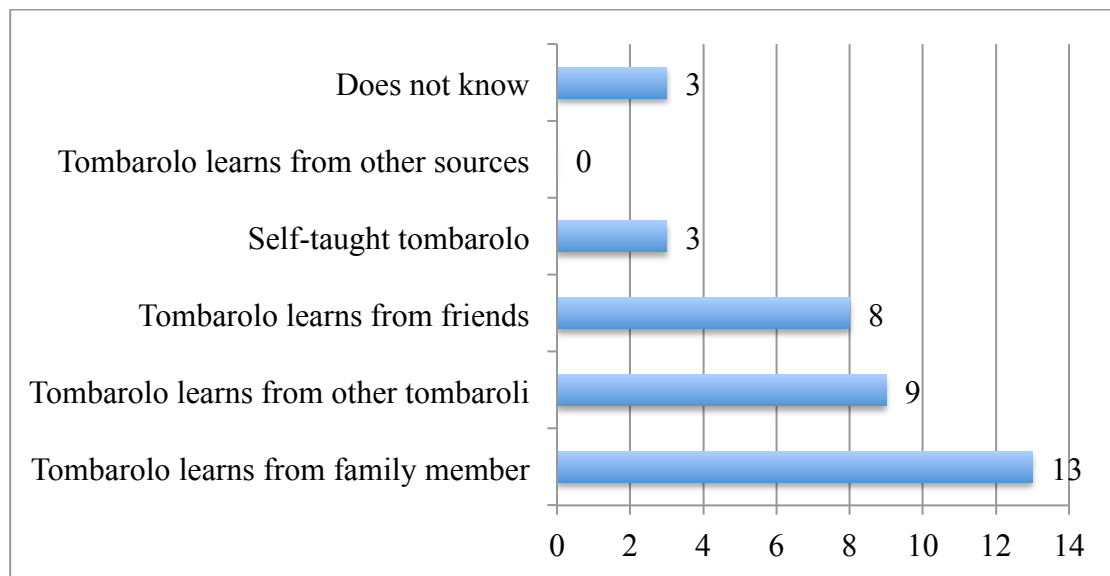


FIGURE 14: Opinions of respondents about the sources of learning for *tombaroli* (N = 24).

Source: the author

A family setting was the most mentioned learning source, according to expert respondents. Many of them stated that fathers played a key role in passing their passion for looting to their sons, but also uncles to nephews.

The literature is ripe with examples of families as sources of learning. Pepe, the looter interviewed by Hamblin (1970), stated how his knowledge on looting was passed on to him by his father. Pietro Casasanta explained once, when interviewed by Isman (2009a) that he was acquainted with looting through his grandfather and later his father. Nine years earlier, when Ruiz (2000) interviewed the *tombaro* Antonio Induno, he stated that as a boy, he learnt to be a looter from his father, and later by working as a henchman for another *tombaro*. But probably the most shocking excerpt can be read from the autobiography of Luigi Perticarari (1986), who wrote:

I am so proud of my work that I even teach it to my children. And they are proud of me. In order to gain respect from other friends they do not find anything better to say than “Watch out, I am the son of the Magician [Perticarari’s self proclaimed nickname]!”. My youngest daughter, in an essay about her father, wrote: “My father is a *tombaro* and brings home so many Etruscan vases.” I even gave to my children an ancient object to show it in class. Once, one of them brought a head of Athena, finely crafted, and the teacher explained it to the kids, and then he took it home to better study it. Maybe he expected I would lend it to him, but it was too important a sculpture so he had to give it back to me (pp. 27-28).

Perticarari (1986), in fact, confesses in his autobiography that he brought his son to excavate tombs, thus fulfilling his promise to teach his labor to his children.

Linda, the investigative journalist, compared how a father instilled becoming a *tombaro* into his son the same way he would teach him to ride a bike. The father/uncle teaches the new *tombaro* what he can or cannot do and what issues he must pay attention to (Interview, Rome, 2017). Vice-Commandant of the Comando Carabinieri’s art squad Enrico,

who during his years in the force commanded twelve Carabinieri art police divisions within Italy, stated, like Linda, that

So many times there is the tradition of father passing the knowledge on to his son, eh. And so many *tombaroli* are children of robbers; it is practically family experience, in some cases. But there is no classroom where they teach you how to be a *tombarolo* because when they dig, they devastate. They are more devastators than looters (Interview, Rome, 2016).

The second most mentioned source by respondents was other *tombaroli*, acting as mentors to younger and eager learners and soon-to-be looters. The literature, once again, abounds with examples. The most relevant is probably, once again, Antonio Induno, who learnt to be a *tombarolo* from his father and another looter, yet eventually he became the professor. As he claims in his interview to Ruiz (2000), he has taught new *tombaroli*, but also some of them, while learning the ropes, went to him wanting his help to sell material for a commission of 10% of the total amount obtained. He even reached the extreme of selling unopened tombs because, as he claimed, less experienced *tombaroli* are not as good at finding tombs, so he points them in the right direction in exchange for a flat fee or a cut of the profits.

Two of the interviewed *tombaroli*, Alfredo and Gennaro, claimed to have learned the ropes through one or more older looters, who had no family relationship with them (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017; Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Alfredo had three older *tombaroli* who taught them, and later, when on his own, he always kept learning from colleagues when chatting with them. However, his knowledge or the knowledge of the other members of his group was never been transmitted to younger generations (Interview,

Montefiascone, 2017). By contrast, Gennaro had plenty of trainees to choose from in his hometown, Montalto di Castro. As his fame grew, Gennaro would regularly be approached by young boys who would ask him to take them to the fields. Of course, he would take advantage of this not only to teach them but also to have younger diggers that would take the most taxing part of the process out of his hands. Younger “pupils” would soon learn about the different forms of terrain; how to scout and spot tombs; the different types of tombs; how to excavate them; the usage of the *spillone*, the rod used to probe the terrain; and superstitions about how to get rid of ghosts (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017).



FIGURE 15. The metal tip of a *spillone*, the iron rod used by *tombaroli* once the soil is properly wet and soft when searching for tombs. Looters insert the rod in the wet soil in search of a stone surface that might indicate the presence of a tomb.
Source: the author (2017)

Finally, the last two ways *tombaroli* learn are through friends and through teaching themselves. The education of *tombaroli* who learn from friends followed the same pattern as those who learn from family members and older looters, but the self-educated *tombaroli* teach themselves from books. *Tombarolo* Omero Bordo considered himself a self-learner. According to his story, narrated by Cecchelin (1987), two rich gentlemen from a nearby town went to the bar of the town where he lived and asked him if he knew someone who would loot tombs for them. Omero volunteered. According to him, “My great occasion was there, brought to me, and I immediately understood I had to seize it. I remembered the tombs that I had seen as a child in Monterozzi and left immediately” (p. 24). He went along with his friend Luciano, took two pickaxes from Omero’s home, and found vases and bronzes in the area of Monterozzi. A similar story happened to Luigi Perticarari, as explained by himself and Giuntani (1986). He was a young farmer and while plowing the fields, he found a tomb. As he stated, “No one taught me to use the *furino* [a probing rod]. I have learnt all by myself, stealing one word here and one there. And probing the soil, and by that, little by little, I learnt so much” (p. 18).

This is the case of three of the interviewed *tombaroli*, who decided to learn to become looters all by themselves, by reading books. All of them were younger than the looters who learnt from other looters, and profited from many sources (biographies of looters, archaeology books, newspaper articles, among others) to learn. For example, the two interviewed brothers who looted together in the same team, Giovanni and Patrizio, claimed they used to go to the Sunday market, buy and read old archaeology books, and then execute it through trial and error. They started digging when they were fifteen (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017).

All the respondents claimed that practice was central to learning. As prosecutor Bartolo stated,

Well, even when older *tombaroli* do not share most of the information, eh? The digger, if he is intelligent, while digging, understands what is the activity of his boss. Of course, you gain understanding by digging. Because the more you dig, the more experienced you become. If the digger is stupid, he will gain no experience, but if he is a person who knows how to look and learn, he gains experience. The beauty of this form of delinquency is that it is old. It has been conducted this way forever (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

In sum, *tombaroli* might learn to become looters from a variety of sources, but having a looter in the family or knowing someone inspires many would-be *tombaroli* to learn.

2.2. Practical and scientific knowledge

Having assessed who teaches newer *tombaroli*, the question of what is being taught to looters can now be addressed. According to organizational learning theory, the knowledge being transmitted to the people integrating the group can be divided in these two concepts: *metis*, understood as experimental or intuitive knowledge, and *techné*, understood as abstract technical knowledge.

While *techné* is taught through formal instruction and codified in knowledge-based artifacts, *metis* is learnt through the practice of the activity itself and everyday interaction with other participants. *Metis*, in this sense, is learned by doing and engaging in the activity *per se*. People share *metis* by communicative interaction between the participants, from older to younger participants, who gather together in communities of practice, and it different several skills depending on the task learnt. This distinction leads to the further distinction between practical knowledge, or the general information and understanding necessary to carry out every day activities; and scientific knowledge, or the technical and symbolic

erudition regarding a particular phenomenon, according to Kenney (2007). Practical expertise is obtained through training and the accumulation of direct experience. On the other hand, scientific expertise only can be acquired through formal education, extending over a period of years.

Both expert respondents and the literature provide many examples of what *tombaroli* learn. Interviewed expert respondents were asked to classify these examples between *metis* or *techné*, after listening to a definition of each category. Expert respondents agreed that *metis* plays a bigger role in the learning processes of *tombaroli* than *techné*. Observation and intuition were the two traits within *metis* that were most mentioned and valued by looters. All of the *tombaroli* recognized that it is very important to be observant and know how to read the terrain. One must learn to pay attention to the growth of vegetation, which is a good indicator of the presence of a tomb, as well as the type of soil and the terrain's patina (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017; Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017; Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). As Prosecutor Bartolo commented, *tombaroli* acquire knowledge by digging, and if the looter pays good attention, he can gain experience (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

The literature strongly agrees with interviewed looters as do many of the (auto)biographies of *tombaroli*. Luigi Perticarari (1986), in his book, explains their task:

How do we do it, when reading the terrain? Easy. We pass and pass again, whether it is sunny or it rains, to observe any particularity. For those who understand how to do it and have an eye for it, it is not difficult to understand where the terrain has been excavated, even in remote times (p. 62).

Metis clearly makes up much of a *tombarolo*'s knowledge. The looters consider, it to be a “*fai da te*” or a do-it-yourself task. Carla, the archaeologist working at the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (the National Council of Research) in Rome, in charge of documenting instances of archaeological destruction caused not only by *tombaroli* but also by construction sites and other agents, summarized the importance of *metis* in the learning process of *tombaroli* as follows:

Thanks to the repetitions, they dig! Then there is always someone who thinks he is better, and without experience, maybe tries and of course digs but, of course, doubly fatigues himself compared to others. But I noticed that whoever does it repeatedly knows where to hit, let's say... you have to understand the woods, see the undergrowth... there is the important role of intuition. Where do you find a tomb, if you have no elements that guide you? So there is also a good deal of intuition on their part (Interview, Rome, 2017).

The interviewed looters who claimed to have learnt the activity by themselves, valued *metis* much more than *techné*. Giovanni and Patrizio, the brothers who dig together explained that they started digging all by themselves when they were fifteen. Their father worked the fields with his tractor, and inadvertently unearthed many pieces, that he sadly tended to discard and destroy. As they stated, they started digging, and once they found a tomb, kept working by intuition. At first, they did not understand anything, but with time, they kept learning from both experience and intuition (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). For example, Perticarari (1987) stated that he learnt from all the details a tomb offered him:

After the joy of the first discoveries, I began to study every tomb, because I wanted to understand more. I observed every centimeter, every corner. Why is [the tomb] so long? Why is it so tight? Why is it placed this way? So many questions, whether the tomb was full or empty; so many problems that I solved all by myself. Every case presented indeed different problems. And I wanted to understand them. That way, tomb after tomb, I got my experience (p. 22).

Techné, however, also plays a preeminent role in the learning processes of some *tombaroli*. Most of this formal instruction comes from books, which to some *tombaroli*, are important when learning particular skills or gaining specific knowledge – knowledge beyond the one gained while excavating. This particular knowledge mostly refers to possible discoveries looters might make inside the tombs. *Tombaroli* interested in archaeology were able to understand the objects they found better so as to know if they were rare and thus price them accordingly when selling them. As such, two of the interviewed *tombaroli*, Gennaro and Alfredo, had a library in the field of archaeology, and one of them, Alfredo, specifically, used to have a tiny laboratory devoted to the restoration of the pieces he found (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017; Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

Some of the interviewed *tombaroli*, and other important ones that wrote books or gave interviews, were great aficionados in archaeology, yet none of them had academic degrees. Some of them know how to identify when the piece was created, how to restore a broken piece, and how to recognize the different types of tombs. Some have mastered enough classical history and mythology to recognize the iconography of a particular piece, and some even own auction house catalogues which they consult to learn the prices of similar pieces. Andrea and Luca explained the following story of an anonymous *tombarolo* they encountered:

Well, this *tombaroli*, when he found a pot, at the beginning, he first sold it, but then he began to look at the books he had, and realized that some pieces were more important than others, so he began to recognize the painters or the types of painting. But above all, they must learn the structure of the tombs. You must also know the different types of tombs, and they must learn it in books (Interview, Rome, 2017).

This is not the only example of a *tombarolo* who strives to learn more in order to work more efficiently and make more money. Literature also gives plenty of examples of *tombaroli*, like Pietro Casasanta, who did the same. Now dead, Casasanta became one of Italy's most notorious *tombarolo*, to the point that even the Wall Street Journal dubbed him "the king of *tombaroli*" in one of those stereotypical accounts that glorifies criminal conduct just because it is fascinating (Kahn & Crane, 2006). Casasanta learnt from his grandfather, a farmer in the area of Lazio. He began looting in Anguillara Sabazia, north of Rome, near Lake Bracciano, an area rich with archaeological remnants.

Casasanta began digging in 1960, and his specialty was to excavate Roman villas, not tombs. In fact, he claims he found more than one hundred such villas. Casasanta would be just another looter if it were not for three very important findings: in 1970, he found L'Inviolata, a large settlement including a temple cult containing sixty-three statues (twenty-five of them life-size); in 1992, he found in a second raid to L'Inviolata the Capitoline Triad, a six-ton marble statue of Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva; and in 1995, he found an ivory head of Apollo, which was very valuable due to the fact that ivory sculptures were rare even in antiquity. He served a year in prison for the second finding.

However, the knowledge possessed by the *tombaroli* cannot compare to the knowledge possessed by a real archaeologist. It mostly assesses the importance and value of the piece. Looters cannot compare their knowledge to that acquired years of rigorous

academic training by archaeologists or art historians. Isman (2009a) quotes Pietro Casasanta in his book: “a digging is like an open book; and I, 70 years old, have been excavating for fifty years” (p. 17). In his recollections about his diggings to Isman (2009a), it can be seen how his *techné* is descriptive. He describes the materials of the pieces he found as “agata fasciata” or “marmo paonazzetto”; he summarizes bits of history with claims like “Under the fields there was an Etruscan city, sacked by the Orvietani in the 1300s”; and he describes artistic styles such as when he notes “There were two neogothic statues and an ugly satyr from the 1780s.”. However, this descriptive knowledge fell far short of the knowledge possessed by real archaeologists. Watson & Todeschini (2007) refer to Daniela Rizzo, who became an expert witness at his trial. Daniella Rizzo declared that Casasanta left the sites where he looted filled with destroyed archaeological remnants. Rizzo also confirmed that Casasanta did enormous damage where he excavated. In fact, he was too ignorant, archaeologically speaking, to realize the damage done.

In sum, excavating is learnt through *metis*, while the connoisseurship of the objects is mostly learnt with *techné*. *A sensu contrario*, a *tombarolo* does not learn how to excavate through formal education in books, but through practice. This practice, however, cannot supply the need for formal learning when a looter tries to ascertain certain elements of the piece he might have found.

2.3. Ways of storing and accessing information

The final issue relates to whether *tombaroli* store this information, and if so, how frequently they access this stored knowledge. Organizational learning theory calls these records organizational memories (Kenney, 2007) and claims that such information impacts how groups learn. Accordingly, respondents were asked whether *tombaroli* documented their experiences in either paper or electronic records

If *tombaroli* decide to store information gathered during the performance of their activities, they tend to do so on paper. These documents are mostly pictures and, to a lesser degree, textual information taking several forms. Photographs record what has been found by *tombaroli*, but also, and more importantly, offer clients sellable goods without having to transport them. During the period of the great raid that covered the last decades of the past century, some looters took Polaroids, as the pictures can be developed without involving a professional, and are thus known only to those involved in taking them.

In fact in the Medici affaire, Polaroids found in the dealer's Geneva Freeport warehouse were one of the main pieces of evidence that led to a conviction. In these photographs, the antiquities were depicted before an expert took good care of them. Salt and mud covering the pieces were shown as they appeared after having emerged from the ground, as described by Gill and Tsirogiannis (2011). *Tombaroli* who took these pictures might amass an impressive amount of them. Alfredo explained that he had more than five hundred pictures, which were seized by the Carabinieri, along with archaeological pieces and other documents (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Nowadays, the age of the Polaroid has passed, and cellphones are the preferred method to take pictures, as several expert respondents confirmed, even though this presents two risks: pictures can be duplicated, as the sender loses control over the photograph and law enforcement agencies can intercept them. According to these respondents, this is the only electronic form of storing information (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, Rome, 2016; Interview, Rome, 2017).

But *tombaroli* do not only use photographs to document their findings. Some of them also write their acquired knowledge and information in a physical format that might include maps, registries of found items, records, among others. Prosecutor Bartolo explained in detail the trove of documents seized from both Pietro Casasanta and Giuseppe Evangelisti, two important *tombaroli*. As he stated,

Casasanta's house was a trove of documents, for example. Evangelisti also heavily documented his findings. For example, he logged all the tombs he found, the design of the tomb, its typology... he even drew them, carefully detailing where the objects were found in the grave. We have all these notebooks... ah, they are beautiful (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

In fact, when Isman (2009a) interviewed Pietro Casasanta, the looter acknowledged his self-education from books. Above all, he read the diary of excavations of archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani (1845-1929), who Casasanta thought to be “the archaeologist of the great Roman [archaeological] campaigns” (p. 92), as he created the famous *Forma Urbis Romae*, a series of maps about Ancient Rome. Alfredo, the retired *tombarolo*, explained that he had a library comprised of archaeology books, Polaroids, and the abovementioned diaries. In these diaries he kept all his findings: the pieces they had found, the asked prices, the money made. All of the items were divided by raided tombs, along with their locations. The looter did not use exact, technical language, in order to willfully make the process of reading them difficult to others. The *tombarolo* confessed that he felt sad when they seized the pictures and diaries because he felt he was losing a part of his own history.

These diaries are now in several boxes marked as evidence in the offices of Daniella Rizzo, an archaeologist, and Maurizio Pellegrini, a photojournalist turned expert witness in the field of looted antiquities. Both Rizzo and Pellegrini work at the Italian Ministry of Culture, where Rizzo oversees, from her offices at the Museum of Villa Giulia, the department of Goods Control and Circulation with the assistance of Mr. Pellegrini. The diaries were written in regular school notebooks and documented his activities since 1997. For example, the diaries state, in poorly handwriting, that in 1998, the looter raided forty-seven tombs, obtaining three hundred and seventy-seven pieces, cashing eighty million lire.

In 2000, the *tombarolo* raided sixty-eight tombs, obtaining seven hundred and thirty-seven pieces, and cashing 164 million lire (\$99,995). There were also some crude maps, childishly drawn, indicating how to arrive at the tombs. Mention of these diaries can be seen in several sources in the literature, such as Isman (2009a) or Watson and Todeschini (2007).

Another important type of documents is biographies and autobiographies of *tombaroli*. In these books, the looter usually not only narrates his life, but also his looting techniques. Historically, since the late 1980s, *tombaroli* have sought public attention by publishing their biographies and appearing on television to present an entirely new image of themselves. Their depictions include an embellishment of their task, as they are portrayed as heroes who bring the treasures of the past to the public and boast of an expertise, which remains unrecognized by official archaeologists.

A careful reading of these stories, however, reveals many issues, which are of considerable importance to heritage management and archaeological research. These accounts contain a wealth of information on the identity of the people who loot tombs; their backgrounds, motivations, and attempts to legitimate their actions. Moreover, they provide a unique insight into the relations between tomb robbers and the communities within which they operate.

Biographies of *tombaroli*, such as Perticarari (Giuntani & Perticarari, 1986), Bordo (Cecchelin, 1987), Tagliaferri (Tagliaferri & Rupi Paci, 1992) and, more recently, Verrenga (2016), are filled with adventures that are bound to appeal to a wider audience. Thus the impact these books can have on a proactive looter should not be discarded. Most inhabitants of the area are confronted with the archaeological remains on a daily basis and many have had a taste of the excitement of excavating tombs at an early age.

One of the *tombaroli* interviewed for this research project, Gennaro, is one of the authors of this autobiography. Both Gennaro and his coauthor, Gemma, a teacher in Florence,

accepted to be interviewed. As we talked for an entire day in a little town near Rome, both explained the process of converting the knowledge of the looter into two books. As they expressed,

- I wrote twelve notebooks, full of his stories ... I have the notebooks in Florence. I rewrote them, I filled them with post-its, and then later, I put all of them together ... These notebooks contain information, mapping ...
- Everything, everything, everything. I gave her everything (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017).

The knowledge of Gennaro was eventually made into several books, where the author recalls his memories of his life, how he formed his team, how he excavated, and the historical evolution of looters, among other topics. The *tombarolo* and teacher have worked on no less than four books on archaeology.

It must be noted that not all looters keep information. Carabinieri's Lieutenant Roberto stated that in fifteen years he had found only a few documents belonging to *tombaroli* (Interview, Rome, 2017). This point of view was ratified by the two *tombaroli* who are brothers, Giovanni and Patrizio, who commented on how they tried to document their experiences but eventually desisted, as they had no patience for this task (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). A final element to be reported in this section concerns access and frequency of this access by participants to this information. The literature provides no insight on this specific issue, and the majority of expert respondents did not know about these issues.

The rest of responses pointed to the fact that looters do not keep or access the information they produce, as this information contains incriminating evidence. Many respondents who lived through and combatted the great raid of Italian archaeological sites

referred to the pictures, which in many instances became the convicting piece of evidence in court. This is the sole reason why these damning pieces of evidence were destroyed most of the time after the selling of the piece had taken place.

The most famous case where the pictures became the Achilles' heel of an entire trafficking ring was the one involving antiquities' dealer Giacomo Medici, whose trove of pictures of unearthed looted artifacts proved fatal in court. In fact, Maurizio Pellegrini, the abovementioned photojournalist, was in charge of sorting them out in Geneva, where the pictures were found. According to Watson and Todeschini (2007), "All the photographs... were arranged according to type, date, and location where the objects depicted were sold" (p. 87). Pellegrini found that some pictures depicted the unearthed objects as they were found; others depicted the objects while being restored; while a third type of pictures showed the objects in the J. Paul Getty Museum's catalogue. That way, Pellegrini could prove the sequence of antiquities being looted from Italian soil, transported to Switzerland, and then sold to an American museum. Another case involved the *tombarolo* Giuseppe Evangelisti, who, in a police operation that raided his home, "lost" four hundred pictures of his looted items which secured his conviction (Isman, 2009a).

Anecdotally, two out of the five *tombaroli* interviewed, Alfredo and Gennaro, stored their information and stated that only they had access to it. Two reasons explain why: first, both thought the material was of a private nature; second, the other members of the team did not care about this information (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017; Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). The only difference between Alfredo and Gennaro was that the former only occasionally accessed the information due to lack of time, whereas the latter stated that he often looked at the material because every time he read the journals, he discovered something new. As Alfredo said, "Maybe in the evening I came back from digging, or the

next day, and as soon as I had a moment, I remembered what I had found and how I did it, you understand?” (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

To conclude, this section has shown how pictures (then, Polaroids; now, taken with a cellphone) have been the most common way of storing information by some *tombaroli*. These pictures tend to be destroyed, as they can easily become incriminating evidence in police investigations and subsequent trials. Other sources of storage of information have been maps, registries of found items, ledgers, books, or diaries, but again, not all *tombaroli* compile their gathered knowledge. Only the person that creates them accesses this information.

3. Adaptations of *tombaroli* to law enforcement

Kenney (2007) defined competitive adaptation as how criminal organizations learn by interacting, gathering, and analyzing information in order to change practices while trying to outsmart police and other opponents in a dynamic interaction. How do *tombaroli* adapt to police operations against them? And do *tombaroli* adapt to unforeseen problems unrelated to law enforcement?

As seen in chapter two, the literature on looting has never attempted to understand the activities of *tombaroli* from a criminological point of view, even though there are numerous examples of interactions between police officers and looters that will be used to illustrate this section. The following figure summarizes the experts’ responses about whether *tombaroli* adapt their activities in response to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents:

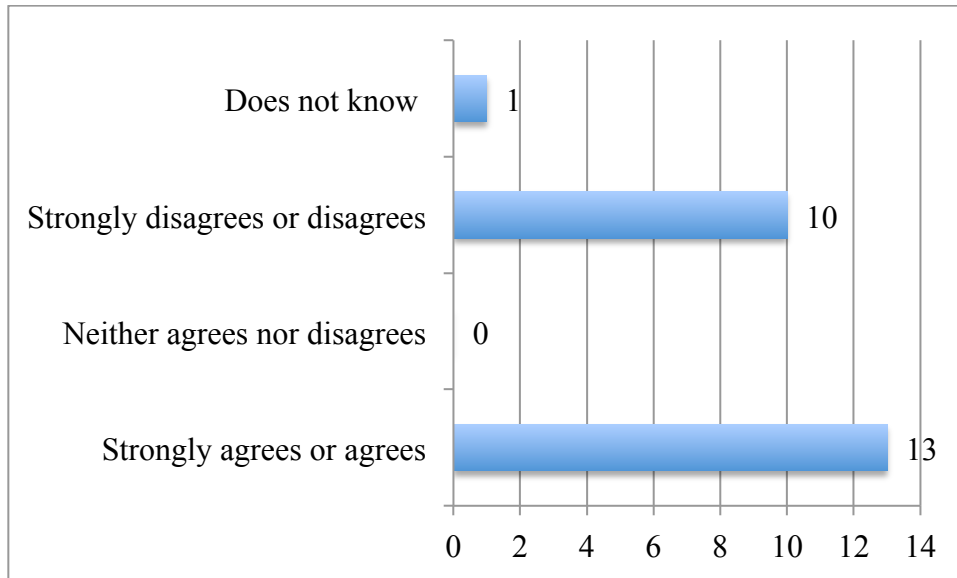


FIGURE 16: Opinions of respondents about adaptations of *tombaroli* due to the activity of law enforcement (N = 24).

Source: the author

The majority of respondents (strongly) agreed that *tombaroli* adapt their way of acting in response to either real or perceived threats coming from law enforcement. The existing literature is filled with these sorts of examples of adaptation, and they can be clustered into four different groups.

The first refers to the operating hours of *tombaroli* and how their timing has varied. When Isman (2009) interviewed Pietro Casasanta and asked if his team of looters worked at night, the famous *tombarolo* laughed at the journalist. Why work at night, when they can pass as regular construction workers with the bulldozer during daytime? Casasanta replied to Isman that his team worked from 6am to 5pm. Graeppler and Mazzei (1996) reported the same trend in the fields of Puglia, where teams of looters used mechanical methods in broad daylight to resemble farmers. However, decades earlier the situation was completely different, as Perticarari and Giuntani (1986) narrate in the autobiography of the *tombarolo*. Perticarari explains how he used to work in the morning because the site's private security

guards would only occasionally disturb him when looking for tombs. With the creation of the art squads in the different Italian police forces, he was forced to work at night. The team would stay in the site up to the early morning so they could blend with people commuting to work.

A second group of adaptations to law enforcement cluster around the fact that this crime happens in a rural environment, which historically has played to the advantage of looters even in times of intense law enforcement activity. Because of the lack of resources when compared to the vast amount of territory to patrol, looters might choose to operate undisturbed in one area while agents patrol another. This might lead to the problem of having to deal with other bands of looters digging in the area, but reaching an agreement with other *tombaroli* is safer than corrupting police officials, according to Linda, the investigative journalist (Interview, Rome, 2017). As Gennaro the *tombarolo* explained,

There is the chance of encountering surveillance. Before, during the week you went twice where it was dangerous. Then when you saw that they had spotted you digging, you did not go there, not for ten days. You went to dig on the other side of the fields, far away from them (Interview, Montalto di Castro, 2017).

As seen in this account, hostile surveillance of the archaeological site is concealed as a gentle walk in the forest, in order to locate the most actively patrolled areas by law enforcement.

A rural environment allows looters much liberty to innovate their adaptations. The literature contains surprising accounts of the measures *tombaroli* take to get into tombs, such as the construction of underground passages. Readers might recall the looting of the tomb of the Medusa, explained in the preface of this research project. The looters managed to excavate a tunnel from a neighboring vineyard straight to the tomb when the security

measures became stronger (Graepler & Mazzei, 1996; Pastore, 2001). Decades later, during the police operation code-named Pandora, police found a tunnel that began in a garage and went towards an archaeological area in the town of Vibo Valentia, in the region of Calabria. The tunnel had carts so the looted items could be transported more quickly (Isman, 2009a).

A third cluster of adaptations concerns the places used as depots or the different ways of smuggling the looted items out of the country. Concerning the former, Graepler and Mazzei (1996) stated that *tombaroli* in the region of Puglia prefer to use abandoned farms or isolated buildings. That way, if police find the looted items, they cannot trace them to a specific looter. In the north, the looted items are hidden in the middle of the forest, in a bush, brambles, or a pit. Perticarari knew plenty of hideouts depending on the area he was excavating, and as a norm, he never repeated hideouts. Around 7pm he would drive his car, and stop pretending that something had happened to the motor; then he would load the looted items (Perticarari & Giuntani, 1986).

Cars and trucks are the looters' preferred method of transportation. Archaeological findings sometimes share space in a truck with vegetables and fruits. The most famous case of this was the statue of the goddess Aphrodite, illegally excavated in 1979 in the town of Morgantina, in Sicily. The statue left Italy to Switzerland via Milan and Chiasso in a truck, purposely broken into three parts to make it easier to smuggle. As Felch and Frammolino (2011) state, "The smugglers used a carrot truck because the vegetables were transported loose, rather than in crates, making it difficult for customs agents to dig through piles" (p. 108). Graepler and Mazzei (1996) also confirmed cases like the one depicted above, as state controls on trucks carrying food tend to be less restrictive due to the perishability of edible goods. However, because the area of Puglia has one of the main production centers of ceramics, Grottaglie, many trucks loaded with newly crafted pots were also used to conceal looted items to ensure a safe passage through customs.

A fourth and final cluster of adaptations relates to the usage of technology. Nowadays, *tombaroli* use smartphones, which allow them to communicate photographs of the finds via Twitter, Facebook, or Whatsapp. And even though communications can be intercepted, *tombaroli* can either speak in code or use public phones. Operation Pandora has provided new examples and a trove of details regarding technological advances employed by *tombaroli* to elude police. These looters are considered highly technologically advanced, even managing to buy some of these gadgets abroad, such as a potent metal detector. In order to be cautious, they talk in code. If looters use in a phone call the name *Pietro* and the verb *portare* (to bring), as in “Did Pietro bring anything?” it meant the looted items will be in the agreed upon place; if *Pietro* is combined with *posto* (place), a meeting is requested. In the wiretappings, a looter is scolded because he asked for a specific tool over the phone (in Italian, un *arnese*) without using coded language. In any case, coin-operated phone booths are also employed (Isman, 2009a).

In some instances, these adaptations are mild, as looters and police agents might know each other from the rural areas where they live. Sometimes there is even a certain rapport between them. Hamblin (1970) explained how the *tombarolo* she interviewed, Pepe, used to play hide-and-seek with police officers and bet 10,000 lire (\$16) that they could not catch him. Migliore (1991), in his study of Sicilian *tombaroli*, stated that “... certain officials may ignore or take a less active interest in treasure-hunting activities on minor and/or uninvestigated sites, in order to preserve friendly relations with members of the community” (p. 163). In fact, one of the interviewed *tombaroli*, Alfredo, explained that he had a very good relationship with the marshal in his town. If when greeting him any given morning, the agent returned the greeting, Alfredo knew all was fine. However, if he did not, Alfredo knew something was wrong and then he stopped digging for a week (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017).

For all these reasons, *metis* comes in handy when finding a tomb. Some degree of experimental or intuitive knowledge is required in order to do well and avoid detection and detention while looting. Marco, a professor of archaeology at the University of Salento summarizes how *metis* is really important:

I've seen recordings from Carabinieri who filmed *tombaroli* while they worked, and you can tell they feel safe. They have to be cunning, trying to figure out when police might not appear, because after all, they cannot think and control everything. When their cunning fails, that is the time when you can arrest them. But I think they are at least organized enough. The peasant may do it more naively; others, it's clear they know they are doing it and so they are more alert (Interview, Rome, 2017).

The role of the police officers is to level themselves with the advantages *tombaroli* enjoy over their state adversaries. Long gone are the days that Hamblin (1970) talked about in her book, where a police officer, Colonel Scordino, on his days off used to dress in civilian clothes, guidebook included, and roam the Etruscan archaeological sites looking for illicit diggings or sellers of looted items. There would not be enough Colonel Scordinos in Italy to enforce the great raid. According to all of the interviewed law enforcement respondents, some of them from the Carabinieri, and one of them from the financial police, *tombaroli* clearly adapt to their investigations. Law enforcement agents use snitches (called *antenne*; antennas), perform raids, get rival families to testify against a competitor, or request wiretaps to examining magistrates in order to intercept what is being planned over cellphones (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, Rome, 2016; Interview, Rome, 2017). That is why Bartolo, the prosecutor specialized in criminal cases against Italian cultural heritage, explaining that investigations involving *tombaroli* need to be refined as adaptation certainly

plays a role in their successes. Evidently, adaptations of *tombaroli* have to be inserted into the tactics of the investigations, forcing police to check all these possible sources of data transmission (Interview, Olgiata, 2017).

Some respondents (strongly) disagreed with the fact that law enforcement has had an impact on *tombaroli*, believing that *tombaroli* do not need to adapt to their possible threats. The reason is the lack of a severe penalty, which facilitates looters, once caught and (if) punished, to reoffend. In consequence, when looters start reoffending they keep using the same methods. According to these respondents, there is no need to adapt to law enforcement. For example, Andrea and Luca, archaeologist and expert in the field, respectively, did not think *tombaroli* care about being caught by police. As with common offenders, police officers warns them, “Look, I've seen you and if you do something I'll take you,” yet the *tombaroli* goes on looting (Interview, Rome, 2017). In fact, the *tombaroli* brothers (Giovanni and Patrizio), the youngest of all of the interviewed looters, stated bluntly that they could not care less about the Carabinieri (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). However, the point of view of these expert respondents is not the predominant view for two reasons. On one hand, because they mostly refer to the capacity of reoffending of *tombaroli*, yet their opinions neither confirm nor deny the capacity of looters to adapt to law enforcement. In fact, the data provides many examples that show how *tombaroli* interact and analyze information in order to change their *modus operandi* in order to attempt to outsmart police.

In sum, *tombaroli*, like other types of offenders, are susceptible to competitive adaptation, and they can change their ways of committing their crimes and learn new *modus operandi*. Examples have been given regarding changing of timing when offending, adapting while working in a rural area, storing and transporting of looted antiquities, and using new technologies. Therefore, police investigations of *tombaroli* need to be refined as adaptation plays a role in their successes.

4. Interpretation of findings regarding the organization, learning, and adaptation processes of *tombaroli*

As previously stated in chapter 2, *tombaroli* fit the different traits that operationalize the definition of organizations used in the theoretical framework of this research project. According to Scott (1998), organizations are collections of participants that, through behaviors that have been previously patterned, coordinate how they operate.

Porter, Lawler, and Hackman (1975) defined the traits an organization must have: it is formed by individuals or groups of individuals; these individuals are associated with each other in order to reach certain goals; these individuals perform different tasks; these individuals act in coordination and according to a set of rules; and these individuals act with a certain temporal continuity. Once one sees that *tombaroli* can be an organization, then one can understand how they can learn as a collective. The following sections present an analysis of the results that have been presented up to this moment.

4.1. A simple, traditional way of organizing modeled after centuries of looting

One cannot understand how *tombaroli* learn until one analyzes their structure, as the latter affects the former. The literature agrees upon the fact that criminal groups develop more elaborate norms, hierarchies, and procedures over the years (Curtis & Wendel, 2000). These routines develop because of the imprint that experience has left (Kenney, 2007). Paradoxically speaking, probably the oldest group criminal activity is looting; many authors trace this centuries-old crime to ancient times. See, for example, Fagan (1977), Meyer (1973), or Waxman (2008), among others. Some ancient accounts in papyri during the reign of Ramses IX (1142 – 1123 BCE) refer to Egyptian looters.

As looting is eminently based on groups, there is the need for some sort of organization; some degree of order is required for *tombaroli* to operate. Even small-scale

groups like the teams of *tombaroli* analyzed in this research project require a minimum of rules and procedures that allow all members to coordinate, while at the same time attempting to minimize their exposure to law enforcement. These groups of *tombaroli* are based on reciprocal support between members of the same team. Thanks to this reciprocal support, a tomb can be dug faster, and its contents can be more efficiently looted. At the same time, if the police raid the looters, it is easier for them to break up and flee, which makes it more difficult to persecute looters. Members can meet afterwards with the looted items, clean them, and establish a price. Because of all these possible contingencies, this specific form of organization has been chosen for many decades and even centuries. In fact, the adjective that best describes this typology of criminals is traditional. The imprint of the passing of time can still be seen in the operations of looters, scarcely modified. Not even the big police operations (mostly, motivated by the Medici affaire) that ended the period of the great raid for Italian *tombaroli* at the beginning of the twenty-first century have modified the looters' way of organizing. At best, these police operations brought to light the devastating harm the looters cause to Italy's archaeological heritage. However, these police operations did little to deter looters.

The literature agrees that small enterprises that supply a single good or service, such as providing middlemen or buyers with antiquities, feature less role specialization. In fact, these roles are contingent on individual members who might not stay for long, thus allowing for a high participant turnover (Kenney, 2006, 2007). The results of the present research are consistent with all these points contained in the literature, as *tombaroli* do indeed distribute their tasks but role specialization is minimal. Also, turnover in these groups is high. Looters frequently enter and leave the teams. The reasons for turnover among *tombaroli* are old age, involuntary expulsion from the group after failing to be up to par with other team members, and achievement of a certain economic status. For example, in the second field trip, Lucia, an

archaeologist, explained how a cousin of hers used to spend the money gained from looting on drugs and alcohol and fell prey to addiction. Eventually, his lifestyle was thought to be unsuitable to his team of *tombaroli*, and he was expelled (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017).

This study has found that recruitment is mostly based upon word of mouth which leads to direct contact between interested parties. This is very easy in closed and small environments such as towns in rural Italy. There is no need for old members to value the expertise of new ones, as new looters are not required to possess any experience at all, as long as they know mostly how to dig. This recruitment can be spontaneous, born in the spur of the moment, or it can also be family-based. In any case, the nature of recruitment is rooted in the fact of belonging to a certain territory.

Hierarchy is determined by the skills of the member within the group. The person who is able to decide the value of the piece, and thus fix a price for it, is the most prestigious and high-ranking member. He not only has a superior role in comparison to the rest of the members, but also a major decision-making capacity. After all, he is the person who connects the discovery to a buyer, attaches a price to the piece, and is therefore is a key player inside the team of looters. However, this dissertation has also found teams that operate on a totally equal basis.

When no member of a team of looters has knowledge about the value of the looted items or where to sell them, they must find a middleman who will do that for them. This middleman usually has an artistic background and cultural experience, probably with academic degrees. He will not, in most instances, loot or have close contact with *tombaroli*, unless there is an important piece that he has seen and whose safety he wants to assure. In these cases, the middleman does not have a hierarchical rapport with looters but he conditions their work.

Orders do not necessarily need to be followed. As there are no hierarchies in the strict sense of the word, *tombaroli* do not give orders but rather counsel the other looters where to dig or how to proceed in order to avoid law enforcement detection. In any case, these counsels are commonsensical. As a consequence, because these counsels are not interpreted as orders, members might disobey them without repercussions.

In sum, *tombaroli* seem to be firm believers of the adage *if it isn't broken, don't fix it*, as they have successfully used their simple ways of organizing themselves for generations. The only change regarding the organization of looters is that some groups of looters have started using foreigners, whereas in the past membership was dictated mostly by kinship or friendship ties. This change allows for speculation of whether the presence of foreigners might lead to a more formally structured organization, which, in turn, might eventually redefine the form of the crime, from the execution to the final distribution of the goods. A possible example would be a significant penetration of criminal groups from other countries (for example, Eastern European). This might result in archaeological looted items eventually becoming mixed with other goods such as drugs or stolen luxury cars, and being sold altogether in stock. In any case, the presence of foreigners certainly implies a loss of criminal professionalization, if these newcomers are to be compared to the old looters that have been tomb raiding for decades.

This section has discussed the straightforward and simple structure used by *tombaroli*. But before assessing how structure has an imprint on learning let's turn the analysis towards what is being learnt by *tombaroli* and who is teaching them.

4.2. *Metis* for all; *techné* for some

The learning processes of *tombaroli* begin mostly with family members. Teams of looters can consist of fathers, sons, uncles, cousins, and nephews, to cite some examples. Older

generations in the family play an important role in transmitting their knowledge for looting to the younger generations. The process is not at all different from other knowledge that might be passed from the former to the latter. Other mentioned learning sources were older *tombaroli*, who had no family ties to the learner; friends and colleagues; and finally, those looters who have learnt the ropes of raiding tombs all by themselves, mostly by learning all the required information from books.

The presence of both *metis* and *techné* have been clearly established in the task of looters. There is an ability born directly from the contact with the looted object and the previous illicit excavation (*metis*), and a more matured ability where a looter appreciates the worth of the item and is able to establish an economic value (*techné*). In order to do so, it is important to acquire specific knowledge about archaeology and the antiquities market. A strong rapport with the territory is the foundation for *metis*, whereas a strong rapport with the object is the foundation for *techné*.

Techné has strong ties with the evolution of looting in the twentieth century. People who lived in rural areas after WWII, mostly devoted to farming and plowing the fields of Italy, started finding archaeological pieces unearthed by their own human activity, by landslides, or by other natural causes. As inhabitants of any given rural zone started to notice these pieces and sold them as a form of subsistence, they realized there was a growing market in looting antiquities. At that point, farmers turned into looters and started to use farming tools to excavate tombs; on some occasions, they even created their own specific instruments in order to avoid destroying valuable pieces. Up to this point, the *metis* employed by the farmer to plow the fields was adapted by the *tombaroli* to loot. The beginning of some sort of *techné* is also perceivable in this precise moment of the evolution of looting, as an eagerness to know more about the looted items started to develop. It all began with the sensitivity that some looters felt towards not destroying sellable items. This *techné*, however, was severely

challenged, as farmers did not have the capacity to learn about archaeology, thus not acquiring the competences that allowed them to value the most important pieces properly.

With time, *techné* fully emerged within teams of *tombaroli*. If no one in the team acquired this knowledge, as still happens in some groups today, the transactions of the looters were more quantity-based rather than quality-based. If *tombaroli* cannot be competent in the illicit market where they operate, they need someone who has the *techné* they might not possess. This factor highlights the continuation, in some instances, of a long chain that keeps advancing with middlemen, antique shop owners, art historians, and other players who are connoisseurs of the archaeological object. From the moment any given looter understood that an item he found in a tomb had some value, he took care of his economic interests. Some *tombaroli* tried to learn more technical procedures in order not to damage the piece when excavating. As this knowledge went beyond basic excavation techniques, it could not be gathered orally; thus there developed the need for a *techné* learnt through formal instruction and codified in knowledge-based artifacts. As previously analyzed, this scientific knowledge alongside the practical knowledge acquired after years of digging tombs puts any given *tombarolo* in a better position inside the teams of looters.

Most of the activities of *tombaroli* require a great deal of practical knowledge. These activities involve (roughly) finding a suitable team for the digging of the day (if some team members have left and more manpower is required), driving to the area, scouting for a possible spot where a tomb might lie by observing the terrain, wetting and probing the soil, contacting the owner of the terrain, starting digging, watching for law enforcement officials, securing the tomb, entering the tomb, raiding the tomb, taking the archaeological goods, studying them, restoring them, valuing them, showing them to prospective buyers, contacting (if needed) middlemen, and finally delivering them. The older or more experienced *tombarolo* will lead the operations, even though it is worth remembering that hierarchy in

teams of looters is diluted. In contrast, most of the activities of *tombaroli* do not require much scientific knowledge. In fact, the knowledge required is minimal, as driving, watering the soil, and digging are practical activities that anyone with a little practice can quickly do or learn. Even the more complicated tasks, which involve a certain amount of archaeological knowledge, such as identifying the looted goods or valuing them, are pretty rudimentary; the looter acquires this knowledge without any official training in archaeology. Knowing these issues, in fact, is not essential, as *tombaroli* can access people outside their circle (an antique dealer, for example) who will do that for them. This is the only repercussion from lacking scientific knowledge.

With this clear-cut distinction between practical and scientific knowledge, it is evident that not everybody feels inclined or is fit to advance his learning based on the latter. In order to excavate, everybody needs *metis* and to learn the basics. Practice is an essential requirement for learning *metis* in a physically demanding activity such as looting. Regarding *techné*, it is very normal to find in the existing literature the figure of the *tombarolo* who, though lacking in formal education, knows a lot about archaeology. This trait has been confirmed by the interviews on which the present research is based. The reason a looter starts learning *techné*-based knowledge is the need to understand which objects need to have time invested in them and which do not because, for example, there is money required to restore them.

Tombaroli acquire knowledge and experience based on trial and error. They, for instance, need to estimate where a centuries-old tomb might be buried, and to spend hours excavating it in order to see if their guess was worth the time invested or not. Their sources of knowledge are team members, looters from other groups, outside consultants such as middlemen, and finally, even archaeologists and law enforcement agents. This information mostly refers to techniques and practices related to locating tombs, excavating them, raiding

them, restoring objects, and placing them with a buyer. As an example, during the first field trip with an old *tombarolo*, he engaged in an amicable conversation with a retired professor of archaeology who used to be in charge of the excavations in the middle of a necropolis. The three talked about the phenomenon from a historical perspective. More relevant, in the second field trip, a perfume bottle was discovered by a group of archaeologists. While digging, no less than three old *tombaroli* came to inquire in different moments what the archaeologists had found and gave directions to them on how to excavate properly. Both the archaeologists and *tombaroli* knew each other and kept a polite conversation, even though archaeologists did not reveal the importance of the item they had unearthed.



FIGURE 17. During the first field trip, many illegally excavated tombs were shown outside the visiting perimeter of the necropolis of Cerveteri. When found, the archaeological superintendent of the area must secure and assess the damage of the looted tomb. Sadly, this is a recurring sight in the area.
Source: the author (2017)

As has been seen throughout the chapter, looters seek information to resolve problematic situations, such as dealing with landowners, covering their tracks by literally covering the excavation they have performed, avoiding injuring themselves or dying because of collapsing tombs, among other examples. The exchange of this information is informal and often takes place in bars and *in situ*, in the fields where looters operate. Since police

operations conducted in the late eighties and nineties brought attention to the figure of the *tombarolo*, books and news articles have been produced about the tasks and achievements of looters. These works also have contributed to the dissemination of a relatively simple know-how (looting) to an Italian audience eager to know more about these looters, whose task is sometimes even romanticized. However, the lack of looters serving prison time has not made penitentiary institutions sites for the interchange of knowledge.

The knowledge about how to be a *tombarolo* is mostly transmitted orally. This is not to say that no information is ever codified in documents. After all, if there were no documentation and storage of knowledge and experience, organizational learning could not occur. Yet codification of information is rare and is mostly devoted to *techné* rather than *metis*. There is no manual for how to be a *tombarolo*: this is because Italian looting is very atomized with many teams looting around the fields of Italy, and it is, therefore, very competitive. In order to prevent other groups from finding the best tombs first, *tombaroli* guard their knowledge. They generally do not produce written documents that are easily accessible to others. For example, most of the excavating techniques are old and are passed down orally from generation to generation. At the same time, these techniques are not so complicated that they require written explanation, even though *tombaroli* who have invented new techniques have documented them. Finally, existing rules are not formally codified in documents yet they are widely understood among the cadre of looters due to their simplicity.

In recent times *tombaroli* have used ledgers, notebooks, maps, books, and pictures to record and store information. Due to the criminal nature of the business of *tombaroli*, record-keeping is risky for those involved. Even though not all *tombaroli* record their experiences (some of the interviewed *tombaroli* stated that they can recall a lot of information, even though memory *per se* is fallible), documents and pictures have been recovered in raids. The result has been looters adapt to these interceptions through the usage of handwritten notes

with coded information and/or passing the information of found items through Polaroid and other formats of pictures (nowadays, mostly electronic). Some *tombaroli* can also document their financial transactions and even code them.

The goal of having all this knowledge gathered and stored is to, in the words of Kenney (2007), "...give meaning to the data through retrospective sense making" (p. 156). Participants share their perceptions and from here construct intersubjective understanding of what has occurred to them and their surroundings. When unpredictable events occur, participants in the group are forced to make sense of what happened, share their perception of problems, and propose a new way of proceeding (see Furden, 2000; Homero, 2000; Restrepo, 2000; Velasquez Romero, 2000).

In sum, the *métier* and the know-how of looters is passed from one generation of *tombaroli* to another, mostly within family members devoted to looting or by other looters who coexist in the same rural area where looting occurs. The type of information that is being passed down is eminently practical, even though some *tombaroli* acquire rudimentary technical knowledge about archaeology. Although this information is rarely codified, this research project has highlighted the relationship between means of storing information and learning to be a looter. The last section analyzes the adaptation processes of *tombaroli*.

4.3. Looters are adaptable to new challenges

It would certainly be strange that teams of *tombaroli*, unlike other organizations, would not change practices and adapt in response to new events, whether these are hostile (law enforcement-based) or not. In fact, the task of a looter is ripe with challenges; thus *tombaroli*'s activities have adapted to improve their efficiency and avoid detection by law enforcement officials and other problems. Even a relatively simple task like unearthing a tomb by excavating without any care for the archaeological context requires, as Kenney

(2007) puts it, a core technology made of the inputs necessary to perform work. In fact, the greatest changes to looting have been technological ones; over time, more modern techniques and technologies have been embraced to produce a faster and more efficient process of excavating a tomb.

Nowadays, alongside the traditional techniques used by tomb raiders (pin, spade and pickaxe), *tombaroli* use bulldozers, mechanical diggers, dynamite, metal detectors, power saws, and drills to complete their task faster. Looting is perpetrated at the expense of the tomb, as these tools inevitably end up destroying the morphology of the site making it difficult for scholars to interpret. At the same time, the items found and removed without scientific criterion lose all the information that is derived primarily from the original context (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2008).

The second most important change in the operations of *tombaroli* concerns communications. The *tombaroli* have greatly improved in recent decades at selling their looted items. *Tombaroli* nowadays are able to communicate with their middlemen or their direct clients without having to be exposed. Cellphones allow for these pictures to be sent with no further danger than losing control of the distribution of the picture once it reaches its destination. (Decades ago, the Polaroid picture guaranteed secrecy when showing archaeological goods to clients, as they did not even have to expose their own pictures by taking them to a studio.). These communications have always been done in coded language to avoid detection, as wiretapping is a common danger they have to face from law enforcement agencies. Finally, *tombaroli* can reach an international clientele by speaking in chat rooms behind the secrecy of such an easy and widespread technique as a firewall. The researcher participates in a European Union funded research project entitled “In defense of the integrity of archaeological heritage” (InDefInArq). In one of the meetings in Granada, in the south of Spain, a police officer from the National Police’s unit of protection of cultural heritage

explained how Italian *tombaroli* attempt to sell their findings around the world in chat rooms and Internet forums. Spain was a desired destination because of the ease of communication between buyers and sellers, as Castilian and Italian are Roman languages and the buyer and the seller can easily understand both languages.

Data include examples of competitive adaptation between looters and police agents due to law enforcement's activities. The rural nature of looting helps *tombaroli* to move their activities to one area and work undisturbed while agents patrol another. Competitive adaptation converts the world of *tombaroli* into a kind of game of cat and mouse played between police and looters in the Italian fields. Teams of looters have to reassess continuously whether the territory where they operate is risky due to law enforcement patrols.

Certainly, there has been an evolution in the role of law enforcement regarding the patrolling of rich archaeological areas. However, there is a huge difficulty to surmount, which is the vast quantity of terrain to patrol (the so-called concept of Italy being an open-air museum), when compared to the available resources. Both the Carabinieri and the Guardia di Finanza have a steadier presence in the territory and can guarantee a more intense control than during the previous decades of the great raid of Italian archaeological heritage. The safeguarding of the security of archaeological areas also needs technical means that can expand the reach of human surveillance, which are slowly being implemented, such as drones, cameras, and other technological devices, even though their reach is still limited when compared to the mobility of the teams of *tombaroli*.

In conclusion, *tombaroli* have changed little with the passing of time - the activities involved in looting a tomb are straightforward and consequently do not require much change. In any case, *tombaroli* have adapted mostly to technological advances and to law enforcement action.

5. Coda: Italian archaeological looting, nowadays

After a few decades of police operations against *tombaroli*, middlemen, dealers and the abusive purchasing practices of private collectors and international museums, there is a consensus within the Italian criminal justice system and other experts that the period known as *grande razzia*, the great raid, is over (Isman, 2009). Because of these operations, the supply chain of looted antiquities in Italy seems, if not broken, appreciably damaged. Gone are the days when dealers like Giacomo Medici and Gianfranco Becchina could thrive selling antiquities to wealthy clients abroad. But this dissertation has proven that *tombaroli* still exist and operate nowadays. Can it be said that the situation has improved? Are the days of the great raid really over yet? What is the situation of Italian archaeological looting, today? This last section completes an up-to-date criminological analysis of contemporary Italian tomb raiding. The interviews concluded by asking the expert respondents' opinion about whether the problem of looting in Italy remains the same, the phenomenon has grown worse or has lessened.

The majority of expert respondents thought that the situation concerning archaeological looting in Italy is nowadays better than in the past. Expert respondents believed that big police operations had (and still have) an impact on curbing this phenomenon, alongside the seizures conducted by the Italian Culture Ministry. In fact, official statistics by Carabinieri shown in the introduction of this research project indicated that looting has drastically diminished from 216 detentions in 2006 to 58 detentions in 2016 (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2016). These expert respondents agreed with the statement that the period of *la grande razzia* is finished and the days of frenetic activity of *tombaroli* are over.

These police operations targeted not only *tombaroli* but also the market, in order to shut down demand of Italian looted antiquities by museums and private collectors. Probably

the most notorious case was the one involving Marion True. True was an American curator who, because of her job as head of the antiquities department at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Malibu, California, was in regular contact with dealers of illicit antiquities Giacomo Medici and Gianfranco Becchina. She was charged with conspiracy to receive illegally excavated and exported Italian antiquities along with the abovementioned dealers. True stood trial for five years in an Italian court, and was not convicted as the case expired due to the statute of limitations in late 2010. Her reputation never recovered from the sustained damage and True became a pariah in the art world (Felch & Frammolino, 2011; Lervik & Balcells, 2014; Watson & Todeschini, 2007). But True's case is only the tip of the iceberg of much repatriation yet to come. Cases like this have had an impact on the incentive to become or to keep being *tomboroli*, as their activities are not only riskier, but also now yield less profit than before. As this dissertation has shown, many looters no longer work full time as they used to before the 2000s, but rather keep doing it as a way of enhancing their meager salaries in other jobs.

Years ago, in the area of Cerveteri and Vulci, every day a truck left filled with looted items; entire containers were filled with archaeological goods. These are trends from the past. In a necropolis like Cerveteri, for example, today rarely more than one team can be seen looting it, whereas in the past up to eighteen teams could be involved (Isman, 2009). *Tombaroli* who keep looting are not so worried about finding great pieces that might cash them a lot of money, but rather they aim to find a steady flow of average items of a lesser economic value that do not attract so much attention and/or that are easier to sell. With less important pieces, *tomboroli* require the participation of middlemen or antique dealers even less; they can sell these pieces by themselves. This is the equivalent of what is labeled in the field of art theft as "headache art." Instead of targeting big institutions with big

names, art thieves devote themselves to homes and lesser-known painters that do not call for media attention or big police operations (Knelman, 2011).

An important result discovered by this dissertation that is worth remembering, as a contributing factor to the improvement of the looting scenario in Italy, is the lack of cultural transmission between older and younger generations of *tombaroli*. Many respondents thought that young people living in towns where there is an active looting culture do not participate in it. Their passion for archaeology has waned in favor of more recent activities; young people do not want to engage in such a physically taxing task. As a result, many expert respondents are starting to consider that looting, for the first time, might become a thing of the past, as old *tombaroli* will not be able to pass on their knowledge to new looters. The weakening of cultural transmission has an impact on knowledge and experience. Being an eminently oral and learnt-by-doing activity, the information can disappear when the transmitters die. At the same time, the risk of forgetting the information is high if knowledge remains dormant for a long period of time or there is low productivity, according to scholars (Benkard, 1999; Buell, 2000).

All of the interviewed *tombaroli* thought that it was more difficult to loot today than in the past. According to the looters, the frequent police operations and important court cases have damaged their activities badly. Their responses represent the other side of the coin when compared to the ones by respondents that thought that the situation is now better in Italy. Alfredo claimed that even though illicit diggings keep occurring, they have been reduced, by approximately 85 percent. *Tombaroli* nowadays, he claimed, are not professionals but vandals who just need some sense of adventure in their lives (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). Alessio thought along similar lines regarding the lack of proficiency of new generations of *tombaroli*; he also said that the market is no longer what it used to be. Now he thinks it is smaller because prospective clients are afraid of buying illicit antiquities

(Interview, Cerveteri, 2017). Along the same lines, Giovanni and Patrizio thought that there was less money to be made because there are fewer tombs (and consequently, it takes more work to find an object). They stated that the market, in any case, is not international anymore but highly local (Interview, La Giustiniana, 2017). Their statement agrees with the literature.

Finally, a small group of expert respondents thought that the looting has not changed since the early 2000s. They thought that although the *tombaroli* have adopted more modern methods, the rate of looting remains the same as it was decades ago. As one expert respondent stated,

The situation unfortunately is still drastic. We are able to intervene and move to the most critical areas. You know that we also have these monitoring systems with helicopters, drones, etc. However, the phenomenon is difficult to stem, difficult to stem because archaeological heritage today is huge and, of course, so much goes on (Interview, 2016, Rome).

Looting, according to some participants, is still rampant, very hidden, and the new batch of *tombaroli* are Eastern migrant laborers. These immigrants are being paid to do the heavy, physical work, and they easily integrate with the local Italian populations, while at the same time they know the territory. The fact that other groups from other nationalities progressively absorb this criminal activity indicates a weakening of Italian contemporary tomb raiding, even in a moment when *tombaroli* tend to be more efficient thanks to technology. This is where the future of looting might lie and where the real cultural transmission might happen, as many old *tombaroli* are dying and not all of them have people who will continue their looting legacy.

In conclusion, as official statistics from the Carabinieri indicate a substantial decline in arrests of *tomboroli*, Italy may be witnessing a change of paradigm concerning archaeological looting. Italian looting had been characterized by being a criminal activity that was highly territorialized: small town looters knew the terrain because they grew up playing in the fields. Also, looting used to be a highly trans-generational criminal activity. The *métier* and knowledge of *tomboroli* passed for centuries from generation to generation of looters.

But times have changed, and looting along with them. Nowadays, looting has been weakened not only due to a progressive abandonment of rural areas in favor of cities but also because of less interest among younger generations in archaeology and looting. At the same time, widely publicized court cases concerning looted antiquities have not only impacted policy acquisitions of cultural institutions, but also might have impacted the sensitivity of younger generations of buyers.

Until recently, looters and buyers were in mutual agreement about the need for discretion, interlocking themselves in a functional synergy based on the fact that the buyer could obtain a valuable good that could not be obtained, due to Italian legislation, by any other means. However, today buyers are more aware of the phenomenon of looting. It is not only that younger generations of buyers might be afraid of a possible punishment, but that they are less inclined towards buying illicit antiquities, as they may be more aware that it is not the right thing to do. Have Italian collectors matured enough to understand that buying looted antiquities has very negative consequences for us all? Time will tell.

6. Conclusions

Omero Bordo, the *tomborolo* who claims he became a looter in the middle of the night because of supernatural forces is a very good storyteller. His story has all elements of a successful biography, but as the present chapter has proven, the way of becoming a

tombarolo is very different. Looting, an eminently group activity, is mostly perpetrated in teams. These groups perfectly fit the definition, albeit simply, of organizations. As such, *tombaroli* can learn as a whole group from the interactions between its members. The organization of *tombaroli* has undergone few changes over the centuries, and when compared to other criminal organizations, the organization of looters is extremely simple. For example, recruitment is minimal and hierarchies are extremely simple, dictated only by age, experience, or both. Even given orders can be disobeyed, and many looters interpret them as counsels rather than mandates.

Tombaroli mostly learn from family members who were looters themselves, or from other *tombaroli* or friends, in a closed, rural environment. There is a great deal of practical knowledge that is being learnt by practice which is orally shared, as opposed to scientific knowledge, which is only learnt by some who eventually lead the teams due to their archaeological know-how. However, this scientific knowledge is amateurish, and not comparable with having a formal education in archaeology or art history.

Even though the know-how of *tombaroli* is mainly oral, it is also compiled in some instances in physical documents such as maps, ledgers, pictures, and other forms of storing information. Their use and importance is confined to the recollection of memories or commercial goals, such as, what was sold, for how much was it sold, and related questions. Because of its nature, the access to this information is not widespread, but eminently private.

Tombaroli has been seen to adapt and learn new knowledge, in response to the action of law enforcement. *Tombaroli* change their ways of committing their crimes and learn new *modus operandi*, such changing the timing of offenses, taking advantage of the ability to move throughout rural areas, changing the storage and transportation of looted antiquities, and using new technologies. A final, closing section will deal with the situation of looters

today, pointing towards what seems to be an alleviation of the problem that had plagued archaeology in Italy up to now.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION: BEYOND THE ITALIAN GREAT RAID OF ARCHAEOLOGY

We are able to intervene and move to the most critical areas; you know that we also have these monitoring systems, helicopters, etc., only that the phenomenon is difficult to stem, because the heritage today, let's say archaeological, under ground, underwater, is still huge and of course it is ... Let's say ... So much goes on, so much goes on.

(Interview, Cerveteri, 2017)

Once the great raid of Italian archaeological looting ended in the early 2000s, *tombadori*'s activity slowed down. Indeed, in the decades from the 1970s to the beginning of the twenty-first century, archaeological looting in Italy was a real industry. However, the fact that the activities of *tombadori* slowed down did not mean that it halted, but rather that it mutated. The interviews in this research project have shown how *tombadori* keep operating, yet in a safer and more reserved environment.

Law enforcement, examining magistrates, prosecutors, among many others, helped put an end to the great raid. Their investigations and court cases highlighted great museums and private collectors who were buying looted archaeology without scruples; at the same time, they targeted Italian dealers to cut the chain that linked them to the *tombadori*. Italian archaeological looting is now a local, instead of an international phenomenon, catering to average clients, instead of wealthy collectors. As a consequence, there has also been a gradual decrease in the number of clandestine excavations discovered. According to police statistics, the numbers of such excavations have dwindled from a peak of more than one thousand per year, in the 1980s and 1990s, to barely 58 in 2016(Comando Carabinieri Tutela

Patrimonio Culturale, 2017). Despite this good news, the fact remains that this type of crime continues to be serious and that Italian archaeological heritage is still at risk.

This chapter summarizes the problem of archaeological looting and presents the key findings that this dissertation has uncovered concerning the contested relationship with traditional Italian organized crime, the question of whether *tombatori* are organized criminals, their learning processes, and how they have competitively adapted. More importantly, however, this chapter presents some policy recommendations to help curb Italian archaeological looting in the new era after the great raid.

1. A brief summation of the problem of vanishing archaeological heritage

First, let's revisit the issue that gave rise to this dissertation: the work of archaeological looters in Italy, also known as *tombatori*. This section aims to briefly remind the reader why Italian archaeological looting is a problem; what problems the existing literature has raised about this issue; and why it was necessary not only to conduct a criminological analysis of this problem but also to adopt a qualitative angle.

Italian looting as a criminal activity

Looters have preyed on Italian archaeological heritage for centuries. After WWII, the dimension of this criminal phenomenon grew larger, as looting became highly profitable. There was not only a national market boosted by Italian elites (lawyers and doctors, among others) who felt the desire to have an archaeological piece decorating their offices, but also a booming, expanding international market. As with any other criminal and illicit trade, the economics of looting was important. When the market increased due to a larger demand, there was the need for a corresponding rise in the supply side. *Tombatori*, who up to the first half of the twentieth century had looted the fields in order to boost their meager income as

rural workers, became more proactive towards the illicit extraction of archaeological heritage in the second half, using more aggressive and destructive means of looting tombs. Looters worked full-time to enrich themselves while depleting necropolises and the tombs located in them at alarming rates. Many Italian provinces have suffered because of looting, though the size of that destruction varied depending on the quantity of the province's archaeological remains.

Looters obtain these archaeological items using methods that are very different from those used by the archaeologists. After walking carefully around the chosen area and reading of the terrain, looters water the land to soften it, probe the soil with a metal spike, and wait for the moment that the rod hits the hard, stone surface which indicates the presence of a tomb. Then the looters dig, quickly and carelessly, until the entrance of the tomb is located. Finally, they raid the tomb's contents, destroying forever the artifacts' context due to the damage inflicted on the tomb.

To conclude, looting in a western country such as Italy is a criminal activity that allows the actors to gain money through the destruction of archaeological sites. *Tombaroli* are experts in attacking archaeological heritage. Since this activity has happened for centuries, *tombaroli* have destroyed much evidence of the ancient history that archaeological remains reveal, and by extension, the ability of experts to decipher ancient history.

Problems derived from inconsistent literature

Even though there is no doubt archaeological looting is a crime, criminological literature in the field has only been gaining traction in recent times, motivated by the rise of the field of art/cultural heritage crime research. The literature on both archaeological looting in general and Italian looting in particular has been extensively developed by other disciplines, mostly archaeology. In spite of this body of literature, the number of studies discussing issues related

to *tomboroli* is minimal, and the criminological contribution is nonexistent. The analysis of forty-six articles in this study revealed deficiencies in these studies and showed how understudied the topic is. Up to this moment the literature that has dealt with *tomboroli* includes studies that examine their activities, motivations, and justifications; the broader topic of trafficking of cultural heritage; the relationship with organized crime; and the prevention of looting in Italy.

These articles, however, had some serious problems, including an excessive tendency towards descriptive studies over exploratory or explanatory research and the total absence of evaluation studies. Further, most of these studies lack a methods section that would allow the reader to understand how the research was conducted. Moreover, most of the research was outdated and sensationalistic, thus romanticizing *tomboroli*. The fact that most of these studies came from different disciplines generated a difficulty in harmonizing results.

This dissertation is a response to the lack of criminological analysis focusing on the supply of antiquities. This dissertation is the first criminological analysis concerning of *tomboroli*. Specifically, after analyzing important gaps in the literature, the project aimed to explain the nature of the relationship between *tomboroli* and organized crime and the way *tomboroli* learn and adapt during their careers. These topics have been misrepresented by the media, which tends to romanticize the activities of looters, and have only been sporadically dealt with in the existing literature.

In conclusion, the literature in the field of Italian archeological looting, albeit existent, is small and needs to be updated with more recent information and needs to move towards more exploratory and explanatory research and evaluation studies. There is a need for more analysis of the supply side of antiquities trafficking, a need that the empirical science of criminology can help satisfy. This dissertation is a first step towards fulfilling these inconsistencies and gaps in the literature.

The usage of a qualitative approach

A qualitative study was required to gain an inside knowledge of such the hidden phenomenon of Italian contemporary tomb raiding. Quantitative methods would not be able to bring the rich data necessary to address the problem of Italian archaeological looting. In fact, looting is a very difficult crime to quantify, as it is not possible to know exactly how many items are stolen annually. Some statistics are gathered by Italian archaeologists working mainly in academia, while others refer to the recoveries of artifacts or arrests made by law enforcement officials, but this represents only the tip of the iceberg. By contrast, quantitative methods can provide a general picture of associations, relationships, and trends

Therefore, the fundamental assumptions and key features that distinguish what it means to proceed from a qualitative stance fit well with this study. The idea for this dissertation was to undertake a qualitative research that would involve getting to the core of the problem not only by accessing a sample made up of archaeologists, police officers, prosecutors, journalists, and other experts in looting, but also by interviewing *tombaroli* themselves.

Finding *tombaroli*, however, is a complicated task, not only because of their secretive trade, but also because the Italian legal system rarely sentences these offenders to prison. In fact, criminologists have not yet achieved direct access to *tombaroli*, forcing them to rely on other participants within the illicit antiquities trade like archaeologists or dealers. As such, this research project is the first criminological foray into the suppliers of Italian archaeological items.

In sum, this research project adopts a qualitative approach with the intention of providing rich descriptions of the problem of contemporary archaeological looting in Italy. Disperse quantitative data from various sources reflects the difficulties of not only

quantifying the prevalence and incidence of this criminal phenomenon, but also of producing an accurate image of it.

2. Conclusions of the study

After having briefly summarized the problem with Italian archaeological looting; the inconsistencies in the literature about this issue; and the reason why it was necessary to conduct a qualitative, criminological analysis of this problem, this section presents the conclusions of this research project by summarizing its results concerning the nature of the relationship between *tomboroli* and organized crime and its conclusions about how *tomboroli* learn and adapt.

Data did not support any relationship between *tomboroli* and traditional Italian organized crime groups beyond anecdotal and sporadic cases

The first specific research question referred to the nature of the relationship between *tomboroli* and traditional Italian organized crime groups such as Cosa Nostra, 'Ndrangheta, Sacra Corona Unita, or the Camorra. This question is important, as the systematic literature review proved that there is a significant lack of agreement regarding the relationship between *tomboroli* and traditional Italian organized crime. The first major finding of this research is that nowadays there is not much evidence of organized crime in this sector; rather, archaeological looting is done by local populations who only loot occasionally and who either sell the items to middlemen or sell them by themselves. Contemporary Italian archaeological looting does not fit the description of the reality of Italian organized crime, which mostly refers to large-scale, stable, and structured organizations.

Data obtained in the present dissertation were not able to assess the existence of collection centers for looted antiquities or even the mafia groups' interest in archaeological

heritage. Consequently, the findings from respondents interviewed have not found evidence of *omertà* (a law of silence), a concentration of antiquities in foreign mafia offices, or even a direct connection between *tombaroli* and organized criminals. Apart from anecdotal, non-significant evidence in the press, cases of organized criminal groups requesting the services of *tombaroli* remain hidden. The few stories in the press are veiled in secrecy, statistically non-significant, and suffer serious problems of validity, reliability, and generalizability. Interviewed looters denied this relationship, and their version sided with the information appearing in biographies of well-known *tombaroli*. At the same time, this specific issue in Italy reflects the troubles in other geographical areas, where the same question resonates with doubt, as proven by existing scholarly literature that considers the involvement of organized crime to be not prevalent in this particular illicit business.

To conclude, despite the fact that some news outlets have often referred to a link between mafia organizations, no support has been found for the involvement of traditional Italian organized crime in criminal activities related to archaeological looting beyond the monitoring of the territory. Ties with individuals affiliated with local mafia-type clans are weak, and in most instances the mafia's interest in art trafficking is devoted to other attacks on cultural heritage, such as art theft or vandalism.

***Tombaroli* themselves cannot be labeled organized criminals**

The findings related to the second research question also rejected the argument that *tombaroli* have a status of organized criminals. The criteria used to arrive at this conclusion are the ones developed by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. According to these agencies, in order to label a criminal group organized crime, all of the four mandatory criteria (the group must be a collaboration of more than two people, the group must act for a prolonged or indefinite period of time, the group's criminal acts must be

punished with imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty, and the group's central goal must be profit and/or power) and at least two of the seven optional criteria (using a specialized division of labor; exercising measures of discipline and control; employing violence or other means of intimidation; employing commercial, business-like structures; participating in money laundering processes; operating across borders; and exerting influence over legitimate social institutions) must apply to them.

However, one of the four mandatory criteria does not apply to *tombaroli*. The data reveals that the commission of serious criminal offences by *tombaroli*, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty, does not occur. The Italian criminal code punishes looting with arrest up to a year and a fine from €319 to €3,099 (\$380 to \$3693). The absence of this mandatory criterion precludes further consideration of whether *tombaroli* can be labeled organized criminals. Were this criterion to be fulfilled, however, *tombaroli* could be deemed organized criminals because Italian looters meet two out of the seven optional criteria, and *tombaroli* thus satisfy the second part of the definition. The two mandatory criteria that have been confirmed through the interviews and other data sources are the first (the specialized division of labor) and the fourth (the usage of business-like structures).

In conclusion, *tombaroli* cannot be labeled organized criminals according to the criteria issued by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. The only missing factor is the suspicion of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty. The penalties attached to looting in Italy are weak, never exceeding the required four years of imprisonment. The fact that one of the four mandatory criteria does not apply to *tombaroli* precludes the possibility of labeling looters as organized criminals.

***Tombaroli* are offenders who need to organize in order to loot**

Applying Finckenauer (2005) and Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) frameworks to the *tombaroli* reveal that the *tombaroli* are criminals who organize themselves, but not organized criminals. Looters operate in loosely affiliated teams of *tombaroli* who can easily provide desired items either to buyers or to middlemen. At the same time, the *tombaroli's modus operandi* does not require a great deal of special technical skills, knowledge, or overall sophistication. Further, the *tombaroli* do not use cultural or subcultural markers; such as identifying traits such as tattoos, initiation rites or uniforms.

Moreover, the interviews reveal that *tombaroli* are most commonly organized groups of freelancers or as family business. Though freelancers perform the requisite tasks related to looting, such as spotting the terrain, digging, appraising the goods, and selling them, they have no division of labor. Because the work of *tombaroli* requires no significant leaders and has no need for a formal division of labor or structure, freelance operators would fall outside the definition of organized crime. The same is true of family structures. Families that work together to actively loot and sell archaeological findings may have an informal division of labor, but they do not appear to have an identified leader or a structure. Therefore, the data also helps dispel the myth of looters being organized criminals.

In sum, neither Finckenauer (2005) nor Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) criteria revealed the *tombaroli* to be organized criminals. The *tombaroli* lacked the sophistication, structure, and self-identification required by Finckenauer's (2005) criteria. Moreover, Natarajan and Belanger's (1998) also does not sustain the notion that *tombaroli* are organized criminals. The fact that *tombaroli* organize mostly either as groups of freelancers or groups with a family base supports the fact that looters cannot be labeled organized criminals.

The organizational structures employed by *tombaroli* are simple

Tombaroli can be labeled organizations, as their teams are formed by groups of individuals who associate among themselves in order to loot pieces and sell them. In order to do so, looters perform different tasks among themselves by acting in a coordinated fashion and according to a set of informal rules. Finally, these individuals act with temporal continuity. Results indicate that the organization of *tombaroli* is simplistic by nature, as can be seen in most of their traits. At the same time, they have adopted the same organizational structure for decades. The only change noted in the results was that the teams of looters increasingly include Eastern European citizens.

This conclusion can be seen throughout the different organizational items that are present in teams of *tombaroli*. For example, role specialization is minimal, and recruitment is very informal, as looters use word of mouth to find people who will join them. Old members do not need to value the expertise of new ones, as new looters are not required to possess any experience whatsoever, as long as they know how to dig. Hierarchy is not based on ranking or authority but rather on expertise and old age; and consequently, *tombaroli* do not give orders but rather commonsensically counsel the other looters where to dig or how to proceed in order to avoid law enforcement detection. Failure to follow these orders does not entail punishment.

To conclude, looting is a group activity, as it is mostly perpetrated in teams. These groups perfectly fit the definition of organizations, albeit simple ones. The organization of *tombaroli* has undergone few changes over the centuries, and when compared to other criminal organizations, the organization of looters is extremely simple, as results have shown.

***Tombaroli* learn mostly *metis* from family members or other looters, and information is sparingly codified in documents**

A simple form of organizing also simplifies organizational learning among *tombaroli*. This learning occurs mostly, as results have indicated, among families and other looters. These results are a consequence of the structures that *tombaroli* choose, whether these are family or freelance. Most of the activities of *tombaroli* require a great involvement of practical knowledge (*metis*), such as scouting the terrain and finding possible locations where the tomb might be; on the other hand, most of these activities require little scientific knowledge (*techné*); watering the soil in order to prepare it for probing or digging are practical activities that even though they require a certain amount of knowledge, this is knowledge that anyone with a little practice can acquire quickly.

Thus, *techné* only involves the more complicated tasks of *tombaroli*, such as those which involve a certain amount of archaeological knowledge, like identifying or valuing the looted goods. Still, these tasks are pretty rudimentary as the looter acquires this know-how without any official training in archaeology. In fact, having this knowledge is not essential, and there might be teams of looters that entirely lack this knowledge, as *tombaroli* can find people outside their circle (an antique dealer, for example) who will do these tasks for them. Therefore, all *tombaroli* acquire *metis*, but and only some learn particular *techné*. *Metis* is mostly learnt through trial and error and continuous practice, whereas *techné*, in the case of *tombaroli*, is learnt through rudimentary study.

Know-how is codified in documents, which are mostly pictures and textual information which take several forms, such as books, maps, or notes. Photographs serve to record what has been found by *tombaroli*, but also, and more importantly, to offer clients sellable goods without having to transport them. Nowadays, cellphones are the preferred method for taking pictures, as one police officer confirmed, even though it presents two risks:

pictures can be duplicated against the sender's wishes and law enforcement agencies might intercept the message. Diaries help looters log the pieces they have found, where they were found, and how much money they were worth. In order to make the process of interpreting messages difficult for law enforcement agencies, looters avoid exact, technical language. Finally, both autobiographies and biographies of *tombaroli* contain a wealth of information about the identity of the people who loot tombs, their backgrounds, their motivations, and their ways of rationalizing their actions. Not only do these books appeal to a wider audience, they also serve as textbooks for proactive looter. Finally, *tombaroli* do not often access this information, and when they do, the access is restricted and not open to every member of the team. Two concurring reasons play a role. First, as the material was created by a particular looter, it was seen as personal. As such, the *tombarolo* does not allow others to access this information not because it is forbidden, but out of a basic sense of property. Second, most other members of the team do not generally care about this information.

In sum, *tombaroli* mostly learn from family members who were looters themselves, or from other *tombaroli* or friends, in a closed, rural environment. There is a great deal of practical knowledge that is learnt by practice and which is orally shared, as opposed to scientific knowledge, which is only learnt by someone who eventually lead the teams due to their specific know-how in archaeology. Even though the know-how of *tombaroli* is mainly oral, it is also compiled in some instances in physical documents such as maps, ledgers, and pictures, among other forms of storing information. Their use and importance is circumscribed to the recollection of memories or commercial goals, for example, what was sold, for how much money, and other items. Because of its nature, this information is kept private.

***Tombaroli* have the ability to adapt to law enforcement threats and to new challenges**

The task of a looter is ripe with challenges. Thus *tombaroli* adapt to improve their efficiency and avoid detection by law enforcement officials and other challenges. This adaptation to new challenges involves mostly both technical and technological changes. More modern techniques and technologies have produced faster and more efficient excavations. The second most important change in the operations of *tombaroli* concerns communications. *Tombaroli's* ability to sell their looted items has greatly improved over the centuries due to technological advances such as standard telephones, phone booths, the cellphones, and cameras.

Finally, competitive adaptation (that is, the one involving looters and police agents due to law enforcement's activities) also occurs. To avoid law enforcement detection, *tombaroli* have altered their hours of operation; moved their activities to different areas; used safe houses as depots for looted antiquities; discovered new ways to smuggle items; and embraced new technology.

To conclude, change within groups of *tombaroli* has been analyzed in the form of adaptation and the subsequent creation and learning of new knowledge in relation to the action of law enforcement. *Tombaroli* change their ways of committing their crimes and learn new *modus operandi*, such as changing when they offend, taking advantage of the multiple work sites available to them in rural areas changing the storage and transportation of looted antiquities, and using of new technologies.

3. Strengths and limitations of the study

It is important to point out both the strengths and inevitable limitations of this study. Throughout the chapters it has been acknowledged that a criminological analysis of the figure of the *tombarolo* has never been conducted, and probably the most important asset of this dissertation is to bring a criminological perspective to Italian contemporary archaeological

looting, in the hopes that this attention on *tombaroli* will stimulate more studies on them. In fact, in strengthening the extant body of knowledge on Italian archaeological looting, this study has established a methodological foundation for future research endeavors. *Tombaroli* might not be the most complex, powerful, or dangerous offenders within the Italian criminal justice system, but their actions cannot be easily dismissed. Also, unlike most studies, this study has centered on the supply side of the illicit trafficking of antiquities.

More importantly, the study has not only brought to the criminological stage the figure of the *tombarolo* but has also shed light on their involvement in Italy as active offenders. For the first time a criminologist has reached out to *tombaroli* and asked them about their criminal activities with the intention of analyzing their responses and obtaining scholarly knowledge from them that is devoid of the sensationalism that often impregnates the discourse on *tombaroli* in the media. In fact, research has demonstrated once again that a qualitative approach to criminology allows researchers to reach hidden populations and gather information from them. At the same time, there are limitations in the present research project. To begin with, while one of the strengths of this study is its exploratory nature, though this can also be viewed as a limitation. As chapter two proved, there is a notable lack of criminological research, which, *per se*, is a theoretical limitation of this study. Going where no criminologist has gone before is not devoid of risks. For example, the tiny amount of previous literature, and its methodological flaws, has made it difficult to compare the findings obtained during this research with pre-existing publications.

When respondents were asked to share their opinion about the generalizability of their answers, most of them thought that their experiences were linked to the area where they lived, in the province of Lazio, Northern Italy. A limitation of this project is that respondents were from a particular area, and different results might have been obtained if the respondents were located in other areas. When permission to interview different officials in different

provinces in the south of Italy was requested to the central office of Carabinieri, access was denied. This inability to interview other police officers from the south of Italy meant that not only did the option of purposive sampling and later snowballing in the south get blocked, but also a trove of interesting data that might have pointed toward geographical variations was lost.

Specifically asking available respondents about the situation in the south of Italy circumvented this lack of help. Other data sources in the form of documents and news searches did not provide results that were different from the ones stated by respondents or better chances to assess these differences. However, this limited this research project's ability to assess the collaboration between *tomboroli* and traditional Italian organized crime. Even though it deems this relationship anecdotal, this dissertation cannot rule out its existence and further research needs to be done.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight this dissertation's contribution to providing the first criminological analysis of the Italian *tomborolo*. This dissertation hopes to become a first step towards a growing, criminological body of knowledge concerning looters and suppliers of illicitly obtained antiquities in Italy. A qualitative approach that allows researchers to access looters and other experts active in the field as a primary source will be needed to shed light on many other areas still existing in the issue of contemporary Italian archeological looting. This growing body of research will help flesh out the scant experimental and exploratory literature in the field. At this point, the number of studies discussing issues related to *tomboroli* is minimal, which is an important limitation.

4. What should be done?

On July 5, 2007, *The Washington Post* ran a story titled "Crackdown Curbs Italy's Tomb Raiders" (David, 2007). The author interviews several people, among the most important, are

noted *tombarolo* Pietro Casasanta and General of the Carabinieri Giovanni Nistri. The latter claims that the action of law enforcement has curbed the phenomenon of looting in Italy. Likewise, statistics culled in this dissertation showed a steady decline in reported cases of looting, from over 216 in 2006 to 58 in 2016 (Comando Carabinieri Tutela Patrimonio Culturale, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016). The repatriation of looted antiquities from abroad back to Italy has also sent a powerful message to buyers. The targeting of the demand side by the Italian criminal justice system has meant that dealers, collectors, and institutions double-check the nature of the antiquity before buying it, thus reducing a possible pool of buyers of *tombaroli*'s products.

All in all, the David's (2007) article summarizes the success story of the so-called "Italian model" in policing the arts. As Rush and Benedettini Millington (2015) described it, "The Italian model proposes examples for every aspect of saving cultural heritage: academic partnership, law enforcement, application of international law, investigation techniques, military deployment capability, protection of archaeological sites, collections security, public outreach and successful repatriation" (p. 175). In fact, Italy was the first country in the world to have a law enforcement agency with an entire department devoted to the protection of cultural heritage, created in 1969 (Pastore, 2001). Other police forces in Italy replicated this model. Still, a modest proposal concerning both police and *tombaroli* can be advanced based on the results obtained in this research study.

4.1. Policing antiquities looting within a problem-oriented policing stance

This dissertation has shown that there is no evidence of organized crime being involved in archaeological looting perpetrated by *tombaroli*. Rather, data suggests that this form of crime is largely a product of rural inhabitants, who need to organize in order to loot tombs from time-to-time and sell them to middlemen or clients. However, newspaper articles imply that

Italian archaeological looting is a product of traditional Italian organized crime groups, indicating that mafia-type groups that are highly organized and structured are behind this illicit business. This dissertation has been able not only to find evidence supporting one side of one of the most important contradictions in the literature, but has also highlighted the fact that the media tends to perpetuate a misconception that is not based on solid facts.

Knowing how *tombatori* organize has implications for the tactics law enforcement use to disrupt looters. When targeting looters, Italian law enforcement agencies should continue using flexible and prompt intervention strategies such as wiretaps, quick arrests, and seizures. Because looters are not connected to organized crime, there is no need to use costly, long-term strategies used against organized groups such as amassing as much evidence as possible before making arrests (Kleemans, 2007). Therefore, law enforcement agencies should approach *tombatori* differently from the way they approach organized crime.

The techniques used by Italian police to stop *tombatori* over the decades have been based on flexible prompt intervention strategies, which work better against loosely organized criminal groups such as *tombatori*. There are many examples of such police operations. The previous chapter discussed Operation Pandora, where Carabinieri from Bari wiretapped a team of *tombatori* for two years (Isman, 2009a), which allowed police to capture them in action. To cite some other examples, Operation Iphigenia seized 3000 amphorae and 23 funerary urns from a necropolis in Perugia. It all began when a person who was well known to the art squad of the Carabinieri attempted to sell eight sarcophagi and a travertine marble head. An expert at the Roman university of Tor Vergata attested that the items came from the Etruscan tombs in an archaeological area of Perugia. Having narrowed down the perimeter, surveillance began and in February 2013, five individuals were charged with the crime of illegal excavation (Corvino, 2013; Povoledo, 2013; Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015). Finally, after the Carabinieri unit in Rome noticed the presence of archaeological items

looted from the province of Caserta in the market, Operation RoViNa ended in Naples in 2011 with the arrest of 12 people, the reporting of 51, and the investigation of 37. In this operation, a law enforcement unit surveyed and identified *tombaroli* by using infrared cameras and managed to seize no less than 520 looted archaeological items (Cecere, 2011; Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015).

During the years of the great raid, police investigations amassed an astonishing amount of data from different police operations that helped curb archaeological looting. These investigations brought names, surnames, places, collaborations, enmities, and safe houses to light and showed how looters, middlemen, dealers, and buyers operate. All this information became a sort of unofficial database that has become a necessary tool for law enforcement agents. Even though the great raid is over and the situation of archaeological looting in Italy has drastically changed (clients are now local and the selling of looted items is more secretive) when compared to a decade ago, law enforcement agencies should still compile data from scattered cases of looting in order to describe the newly mutated looting scenario, reassessing new mechanisms and opportunities employed by *tombaroli*. In this new scenario, law enforcement should be taking a more problem-oriented policing stance, as devised by Clarke and Eck (2005) and analyze the re-occurrence of looting after the great raid, identifying specific areas which are especially prone to looters. Also, this point of view allows for better allocation of resources to be implemented in strategic interventions (Braga, 2005). These models of policing have never been studied from a cultural heritage protection angle, and this fact opens up a new avenue for further research.

4.2. Keeping up the pace with *tombaroli*'s adaptations

Another finding of this dissertation has been that looters competitively adapt to police. If the area is isolated, police officers must follow the cars of *tombaroli* at a certain distance, but

then looters abandon them and go to the tombs on foot. In some instances, police have had to observe looters from trees, as there were no viable observation posts. When police officers install tracking devices in the looters' cars, looters defeat this surveillance by changing cars under a canopy of trees. These are just some examples encountered in the literature (Graepler & Mazzei, 1996; Isman, 2009a; among others).

Even though preventing looting in a vast, open terrain where *tombaroli* act at ease seems a lost battle from a situational crime prevention perspective, law enforcement agencies should look at the data in the greatest detail possible and assess risks of sites while at the same time establishing a presence in those frequently looted territories. Law enforcement units perform scheduled periodical inspections on foot, riding horses or driving cars, and nowadays they can expand their surveillance areas thanks to technological advances such as helicopters, drones, or even satellite imaging (Interview, Rome, 2017). This recommendation pairs the angle of problem-oriented policing with situational crime prevention. By itself, situational crime prevention is complicated in open areas. However, as Grove and Pease (2014) recommend, ranking the vulnerability of different parts of a heritage site alongside data concerning which areas have been targeted should provide an idea about the correct distribution of preventive measures. For example, in 2011 Carabinieri noticed the presence of *tombaroli* in the ancient city of Arpi. The combined surveillance between units of Foggia and Bari managed to catch three looters red handed, even sneaking undetected past the looters that served as a lookout. Both units coordinated their moves rapidly to avoid not only the fleeing *tombaroli*, but to seize them with their tools, which would later serve as an incriminating piece of evidence (Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015).

This dissertation has shown how the organization of *tombaroli* has undergone few changes over the centuries and how the organization of looters is extremely simple. Even though competitive adaptation has mostly applied to important organizational structures like

Colombian drug traffickers or Al-Qaeda terrorists (Kenney, 2007), the underlying results in those instances sought to “level the playing field of competitive learning games” between the advantages trafficking enterprises enjoy over their law enforcement adversaries (p. 255). Concerning the simpler case of *tombaroli*, law enforcement agencies should check three specific angles in order to assess whether these police units can properly compete with the fluid and elusive teams of *tombaroli*.

First, law enforcement agencies should consider whether their hierarchy is flexible enough when it comes to lower ranking agents taking decisions on the spur of the moment and giving them discretion to operate without constraints. In other words, law enforcement agencies should enable the police officers to function more like *tombaroli*. The combination of proper surveillance with hierarchical flexibility should allow agents to stake out at-risk archaeological areas, highlighted due to problem-oriented policing tactics, and to arrest looters.

Second, law enforcement agencies in Italy should consider whether their personnel turnover affects the efficiency of the group. According to law enforcement regulation, police officers must rotate from division to division (in fact, staying in one division for longer than expected is frowned upon) in order to gain experience while avoiding staying too long in one sole area of expertise. For example, some of the interviewed expert respondents in the field of law enforcement came from sections devoted to organized crime or drugs (Interview, Cerveteri, 2017; Interview, Rome, 2016).

Third, and related to the second recommendation, law enforcement bodies should assess the need for requiring specific degrees in archaeology and/or art history, instead of specific and proper training on the issue, and evaluate whether turnover and education has a positive impact on their preventive and investigative work. It must be highlighted how members of law enforcement agencies are first and foremost police officers. As an example,

candidates that integrate the ranks of the Carabinieri art squad can have (but it is not required) degrees in architecture, archaeology, art history, or law, among many other humanistic disciplines. Their personal interests might play a role in being selected by the art squad, such as fine arts, history, and sacred art or similar (Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015; Tiberi, 2008).

Failing to organize law enforcement units so that they are structurally similar to the offenders they seek to deter will inevitably lead to failure, as Kenney (2007) pointed out in his analysis of antidrug agencies in Colombia, which failed to appreciate the effect of police organization on their ability to disrupt the organizations of drug traffickers. Law enforcement forces in Italy, albeit successful in curbing archaeological looting, should keep track of the situation and competitively adapt to it.

4.3. Deterrence versus persuasion

What to do with *tombaroli*, though? An important finding of this dissertation has been that the penalty attached to their criminal conduct prevents looters from meeting the four mandatory organized crime criteria established by the European Commission, EUROPOL, and the Council of Europe. If the penalties for looting were stronger, *tombaroli*, according to these parameters, could be labeled organized criminals, as they would fulfill the rest of the requirements. The punishment for looting is contemplated in article 175.a of the Italian law devoted to Cultural Heritage and Landscape, approved in 2004. The article states that people performing archaeological research without concessions or without complying with the requirements of the administration will be punished with arrest of up to one year and a fine between € 310 and € 3,099 (\$380 to \$3693) (Carabinieri, 2008; Iannizzotto; 2006).

Even though the police and courts, along with other experts, have done their job in ending the great raid of Italian archaeological heritage, some dissenting voices still consider

that sanctions established by the criminal justice system are an insufficient response to the obligation to protect Italy's cultural heritage, as they fail to deter *tombadori*. For example, Pastore (2001) and Isman (2009a) both note that the theft of archaeological heritage from the subsoil is punished as simple theft, which is less serious than theft from a supermarket or stealing a pair of jeans.

Iannizzotto (2006) stated that juridical protection of archaeological heritage remains underdeveloped, as Italian laws offer less protection to the former than to private property. Up to 2004, with the passing of the new penalties, this underdevelopment was caused by a blatant lack of criminal policies concerning looting and the absence of commitment due to lack of familiarity with the historical importance of archaeological heritage. In fact, in the first sixty-five years since the first law was passed to protect cultural heritage in Italy (Law 1089/1939), only five thousand sentences have been dictated in relation to cultural heritage crimes. Therefore, based on a joint proposal by the Minister of Justice Andrea Orlando and the Minister of Culture, Dario Franceschini, Italy's Council of Ministers approved a bill that is being discussed in Parliament in order to give the government a mandate for the reform of the country's rules on penalties for offences against cultural heritage. If approved by Italy's parliament the reform is designed to, among other things, introduce imprisonment of up to fifteen years for those who devastate and plunder archaeological sites and monuments, along with more severe penalties for *tombadori* who cannot justify the possession of a metal detector or ground surveying tools. The project of law also highlights the devastation caused by looting when it affects archaeological areas and restitutes aggravating factors for the crime of looting in archaeological sites (Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, 2016).

However, criminological research clashes with this sort of reform and future policies that might take this direction. Criminologists that have studied the role of deterrence related to antiquities looting consider that it is a problematic strategy for curbing the looting problem

(Alder & Polk, 2002; 2005). The approach, according to these authors, is to target market demand for looted antiquities, thus eliminating the motivations for looters. Moreover, Polk (2002) considers that the three characteristics of deterrence theory (certainty, severity, and celerity of punishment) *per se* are not enough and adds the requirement of an association in the mind of the offender between the prohibited action and the likelihood of punishment. Moreover, Cohen and Felson's (1979) routine activities theory suggests that one of the three factors that need to converge in space and time for crime to happen is a motivated offender. According to this theory, employing target-hardening measures could reduce the suitability of archaeological sites, and the presence of law enforcement and private security could trump the absence of a capable guardian (Mackenzie, 2005). But what can be done about the motivations of *tomboroli*? Alder & Polk (2005) in fact agree with Braithwaite (2002) when they state that, even though there is a place for criminal sanction in eliminating the illicit antiquities trade, the focus should instead be placed on training, education, negotiation, and persuasion. Mackenzie (2005) agreed with these three criminologists and stated that a deterrence-oriented way of curbing looting is inadequate, thus once again advocating an educational approach.

In this research, it has been seen how the legal arena is not seen as relevant by *tomboroli* to the act of looting. Interviewed *tomboroli* often stated that looters never cared or felt threatened by the legally established sanctions. Alfredo even called archaeological looting a *reato d'acqua di rose*, a rosewater-scented crime (Interview, Montefiascone, 2017). *Tomboroli* have kept justifying their activities, even when acknowledging they know they are committing a crime, only because they know what they are doing is not comparable to more serious offences in their criminal code. In other words, looters ignore prohibitions, directions, and sanctions prescribed in the law because *tomboroli* do not foresee a certain, severe, or quick punishment. Even with the passing of a new law establishing a harsher punishment for

looters, the sole threat of punishment keeps failing to protect archaeological sites from being attacked by looters. As the Italian police themselves recognized that fines and court orders could never be enough (Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015).

As this dissertation has found, nowadays, even though the terrible proportions of this phenomenon have been reduced, there are some looters who need the money and occasionally loot. It is very difficult to achieve educational measures towards the suppliers of looted antiquities that might eventually impact on the market. These educational measures are described in the literature referring to looting as those strategies embodied in international conventions, such as the UNESCO 1970 Convention or the Unidroit Convention; codes of practice such as the ones issued by the International Council of Museums or the UNESCO Code of Ethics for Dealers in Cultural Property; and the measures geared towards the education of dealers and/or source populations. Some of these educational measures will come through government initiatives while others will come from academia, the media, and private initiatives (Mackenzie, 2005).

The problem with education at the supply level is that *tombaroli* have incentives to keep looting: zero or low punishment, an extra source of income, low risk of detection that leads to a mild competitive adaptation, and a cultural atmosphere that leads to communal understanding in the rural areas that they inhabit. An insurmountable level of education is required to persuade looters to change attitudes; this difficulty is exacerbated by the fact that they consider themselves as amateur archaeologists who are doing nothing wrong and are thus being persecuted unjustly. In the words of Mackenzie (2005), it is terribly difficult to achieve an effect on the market through education targeted at source populations.

Even though this dissertation has focused on the supply side of the illicit antiquities spectrum, results have touched upon the existence of a major sensitivity in younger generations of buyers, impairing the mutual agreement of supply and demand. Nowadays

buyers are more aware of the phenomenon of looting and might be less inclined towards buying illicit antiquities. At least it seems that the widespread fashion of decorating houses and offices with archaeological items or presenting these as gifts to others is declining. This fashion encouraged individuals who were not important collectors to possess illicit goods that originated in unsanctioned diggings or chance findings.

The genesis of archaeological looting is the degeneration of the idea of considering archaeological remains as artworks instead of objects of science. Collectors who see a recently looted object as art, as nothing else than a beautiful thing to own, are motivated by an intrinsically selfish and personal motivation. The collector does not even consider that they are committing an act of illegal appropriation. Instead, it is necessary to develop approaches to appreciating art that place aesthetic value on understanding the object's context and meaning, which would help bridge this divide. The artistic dimension of the archaeological piece transmits emotions to the viewer; and its scientific dimension encapsulates a historical memory that is safeguarded so it can deliver its symbolic message to future generations while at the same time it holds a way of interpreting the past. Research has acknowledged the value of training local populations to care for their cultural heritage. Cultural heritage carries an intrinsic value, as it is a part of these populations' history, but it also carries an extrinsic, economic value that can be commercially exploited in better ways than looting it. Nobody can deny the appeal of Italy for the lovers of archaeology who will pay and visit sites and museums, thus benefitting entire communities (Mackenzie, 2005; Renfrew, 2000). Therefore, Italian institutions in and out of the criminal justice system should continue educational measures towards the general population and potential national buyers of looted art, not only as a direct form of instilling a national ethic of respect for the arts, in the words of Rush and Benedettini Millington (2015), but to target the action of looters. There is a vast catalogue of educational measures in Italy that ranges from virtual

education of games for children, school programs, internet visibility of Italian archaeological looting, exhibitions of seized archaeological items, public presentations, public outreach, and partnership with the arts for outreach, among others (Rush & Benedettini Millington, 2015). However, at the moment there is no specific literature about the effects of these examples on the Italian public.

Even though this research has verified that the situation in Italy concerning archaeological looting has ameliorated, the results stemming from this dissertation can offer new ways of proceeding and reinterpreting older ones. Whether the *tombaroli*'s archaeological looting will eventually fade or spike again remains an open question for criminological research to monitor, along with the success or demise of proposed and old policies concerning both the supply and the demand side of the illicit antiquities trade spectrum.

5. Implications of the study

This dissertation's use of a criminological standpoint related to the figure of the *tombarolo*, a group not usually central to criminological research or crime agendas worldwide, makes this an original study and the first of its kind within the field of art and cultural heritage crime. As such, it is hoped that this dissertation might benefit law enforcement agencies, policy makers, archaeologists, NGOs, civil society actors, and scholars. It is expected that this study and its recommendations might potentially fields such as archaeology, criminology, and policing, by offering in-depth insights about *tombaroli*, one of the most important risks archaeologists have to face in order to protect their future discoveries.

This dissertation has also recommended that law enforcement officials follow specific polices Police are encouraged to pursue both preventive and investigative ends, tailored after the results of the dissertation, in terms of the *tombaroli*'s relationship with organized crime

and their learning techniques (for example, higher or lower degrees of adaptation shown by *tombaroli*) and adaptation processes. Furthermore, this research might help police to have a research-based, criminological insight into the resiliency of *tombaroli* as they hone and alter their activities in response to information and experience accumulated, choosing the path that might lead them to achieve their goals. In sum, understanding about this particular information can help law enforcers counteract or stop *tombaroli* more efficiently. This research might also be relevant to pinpoint practical problems faced by the Italian government and law enforcement agencies, such as the weakness of laws (lack of or soft punishment) or procedural issues (slow processes, difficulty in gathering evidence to convict, among others).

NGOs and society in general might also benefit from the results of this research. *Connoisseurs*, whether they are archaeologists, art historians, dealers, collectors and/or museum curators whose careers or professional interests are directly affected by the outcome, dominate the debates surrounding cultural heritage. Disseminating results from the dissertation might lead to an opportunity to engage NGOs and civil society actors in a debate that belongs to everybody. This research has also contributed to scholarship by analyzing these criminal activities within an existing theoretical framework that has successfully assessed these particular elements for other forms of crime, such as drug trafficking and terrorism. It is also expected that findings from the dissertation can help future research expand the theoretical development of this criminal phenomenon to other areas (for instance, concerning looters from different backgrounds,) and inform further intervention development from both a theoretical and practical point of view.

Moreover, this dissertation aims to help scholars better understand the interaction between the global and local dynamics of this particular instance (Italy) of antiquities trafficking. In that sense, this dissertation can be placed alongside research done by other

scholars in order to produce a more complete and evidence-based picture of the contemporary global trade in looted cultural objects from different parts of the world. Also, because this investigation analyzes at the less frequently researched supply side, the people conducting the diggings, it complements other research projects which are more focused on the demand side of the illicit antiquities trafficking.

In sum, the rationale of the present study is to apply the figure of the *tombarolo* to the existing body of literature, from a criminological lens. Hopefully, this will help a plethora of groups (scholars, archaeologists, law enforcement agents, to name a few of them) gain an updated picture of the phenomenon of archaeological looting in Italy. At the same time, this dissertation seeks to fill the aforementioned research gaps, and to formulate further questions that future research can answer.

6. Future research avenues

This dissertation is a first step towards understanding the supply side of looted antiquities from a criminological standpoint. In fact, the possibilities for further research abound precisely because of the limited existing literature on archaeological looting in Italy perpetrated by *tombaroli*. This initial criminological study on *tombaroli* and the questions raised in it can serve as a point of comparison for further research on this issue. Some of the findings in this dissertation recommend further studies to be conducted in order to develop a larger database of information to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon of contemporary archaeological looting perpetrated by *tombaroli* in Italy.

Because criminological interest in this topic is so recent, the research still has so many facets to explore. After a systematic literature review, this dissertation has paid attention to two very important topics that required research to try to elucidate. However, the topic of *tombaroli* is not completely researched. As with many other multifaceted criminal

phenomena, more issues can be brought to light concerning looters: their culture and cultural environment; the role played by status; the differences between older and new *tombaroli*; and individual/economic decisions that affect looting, among others. Both criminology and *tombaroli* still have much to offer one another.

The most obvious research avenue that needs to be followed concerning the relationship between organized crime and *tombaroli* is the coexistence in the same geographical areas of southern Italy of organized criminals and *tombaroli*. Access to southern police officers, archaeologists, and more importantly, *tombaroli*, might yield results that proxies used in this dissertation as substitutes for them have not been able to reveal. If the accounts that allege collaboration between *tombaroli* and organized criminals turn out to be true, then it is imperative to describe that relationship between these two groups. It will also be important in order to establish the differences between looting dynamics in the north and in the south.

Beyond this important void, there are many other issues that this dissertation has opened and that can be studied in a more detailed fashion, within the realm of studies of organized crime. All of the items used in this dissertation in order to ascertain whether *tombaroli* were organized criminals deserve single studies devoted to gaining a deeper understanding of them, such as the issue of commercial structures employed by *tombaroli* and the planning of their operations, to cite two of the many examples available. Another important area of study is the nature of the *tombaroli*'s looting organizations, big and small, and the creation of a two dimensional typology of tasks and organizational structure that analyzes how a group's structure connects to their activities. A research project building on this dissertation's discoveries regarding the *tombaroli*'s organizational typologies might analyze which form of organizing is preferred and is more effective with regard to looting specific tasks.

This dissertation has also opened many further research avenues related to learning and adaptation. A deeper understanding of organizational issues such as recruitment or hierarchy requires a study. This research avenue can be linked, like many of the abovementioned projects, to the one researching dynamics between northern and southern Italy. A research project analyzing whether the absence of further cultural transmission to younger generations might encourage immigrants to become *tombaroli* will also be needed to prevent this sort of illicit activity from getting worse.

Another important issue to be further researched within the organizational aspects of the teams of *tombaroli* is the permeation of the trade by Eastern European citizens. As has been stated, this has been the biggest change regarding membership in the last few decades within teams of *tombaroli*. As such, this is a reality that urgently requires study not only from the learning and organizational angles, but also from the organized crime one, as it is important to assess a hypothetical takeover of looting by looters from other countries who exploit Italy's richness of archaeological heritage. The study of minors working as *tombaroli*, another of the findings of this dissertation, should also receive full attention by researchers.

There are many aspects related to *metis*, *techné*, and adaptation that require further research, mostly in order to see the usage of new forms of technology in the act of looting. For example, within archaeology there is a growing body of literature devoted to metal detectors. Most of these articles are descriptive by nature and usually confront the description of the dynamics of metal detectorists of a given area with the existing legislation. However, analyzing the activities of looters using metal detectors from a criminological perspective not only provides a fresh interpretative angle but also allows for new knowledge and policy recommendations. Also, this dissertation has only addressed competitive adaptation from the point of view of the offender. It would, therefore, be interesting to research the interlocking of law enforcement adaptations with *tombaroli*, to be able to compare them and see how

police organizations in Italy learn, and thus contribute to a complete picture of this specific issue.

The whole of the dissertation also can be replicated with different theoretical angles, providing alternative theoretical explanations. Organized crime is a very fluid concept, and research projects that use different definitions could arrive at different conclusions. The same thing can be said about the learning and adaptation part of this dissertation. Even though it was decided to analyze *tombaroli* as a group, other theories can be used to interpret how a *tombarolo* learns, such as Sutherland's differential association theory or Aker's social learning theory, to cite two of the most important ones. Both theories can provide innovative insight into social norms present in Italian rural communities where looting is rampant, thus changing the scope from the *tombaroli* to the communities they live in. At the same time, these theories can highlight the important role of social structures in the determination of the criminal behavior of looters through social learning processes such as differential social organization, differential location, theoretically defined structural variables, or differential social location (Akers, 1998).

Tombaroli are just the starting point of a trafficking chain that is transnational in nature, as the beginning of this dissertation proved. It is worth remembering that up to this moment, every scholarly article, chapter, or book dealing with the Italian situation has only tangentially dealt with the people who find the illicit antiquities. Future studies that aim to understand the scope of the phenomenon of the trafficking of illicitly obtained archaeological items cannot disregard the importance of the supply side. The study of *tombaroli* will be important to assess routes, methods of trafficking, and other issues studied in other transnational crimes, such as drugs, weapons, or organs, to name a few.

In chapter two, this dissertation called attention to the total absence of evaluation studies. This is another important avenue of research that needs to be explored. This research

project highlighted the lack of severity of punishing looters, yet at the same time, as it was being written, there were talks within political parties to elevate the punishment regarding cultural heritage crimes. As such, it is time for scholars to evaluate how the criminal justice system deals with looters and how this impacts recidivism. There is also the need to evaluate whether targeting demand, instead of supply, has curbed looting and whether creating a new culture based on education and respect for cultural heritage will prove to be effective at combating looting.

In sum, it is important to highlight the need for a new body of knowledge within criminology concerning *tombadori*. It makes no sense that we have so little information about a group that has been damaging archaeological heritage for centuries. It is time criminology started paying attention to this phenomenon, and it is time bridges of knowledge between disciplines were built so that the depletion of our common heritage is not lost forever to unscrupulous private collectors.

7. Epilogue

Centuries have passed, and *tombadori*, like the vestiges of the ancient civilizations they prey on, continue to loot. The great raid, the golden era of *tombadori*, has also passed, and even though their activity has changed considerably, looters thrived, survived, and adapted. This dissertation has shown that their activities are now more secretive and their clientele more local, but *tombadori*'s actions are as damaging as ever. It is impossible to estimate the amount of pieces that they have carelessly stolen, and the amount of potential archaeological knowledge that they have destroyed. At this moment in time, law enforcement agencies, examining magistrates, prosecutors, and archaeologists, to name a few, still combat these looters. The end of *tombadori* and Italian archaeological looting remains elusive, and all of those invested in stopping it know that. Even with all of the gains law enforcement has made

since the great raid, there is still much room for improvement. This chapter has proposed possible improvements that could be implemented.

Just as all those involved in stopping this awful business still have a lot of work to do, so do those involved in scholarly research. Since previous phases of the activity of *tombaroli* have been documented, it will be important to assess what happened after the great raid and see how this form of criminal activity evolves. This task needs to be done not only by archaeologists and law scholars, as it has been up to now, but also by criminologists, who have a virtually unexplored world to empirically analyze. This dissertation has not only focused on the relationship of *tombaroli* with traditional Italian organized crime but also on the conceptual debate surrounding this sort of criminal and the way they learn as a group. However, it could have focused on completely different topics concerning looters. Archaeological looting is a field ripe with opportunities for criminological research. Hopefully, this dissertation has raised as many questions as it has provided answers. Criminological analysis needs to take a preeminent position in order to better understand dynamics of the supply side of illicit trafficking in looted antiquities. Any theoretical point of view may help understand better this blight against archaeological heritage and help formulate practical solutions.

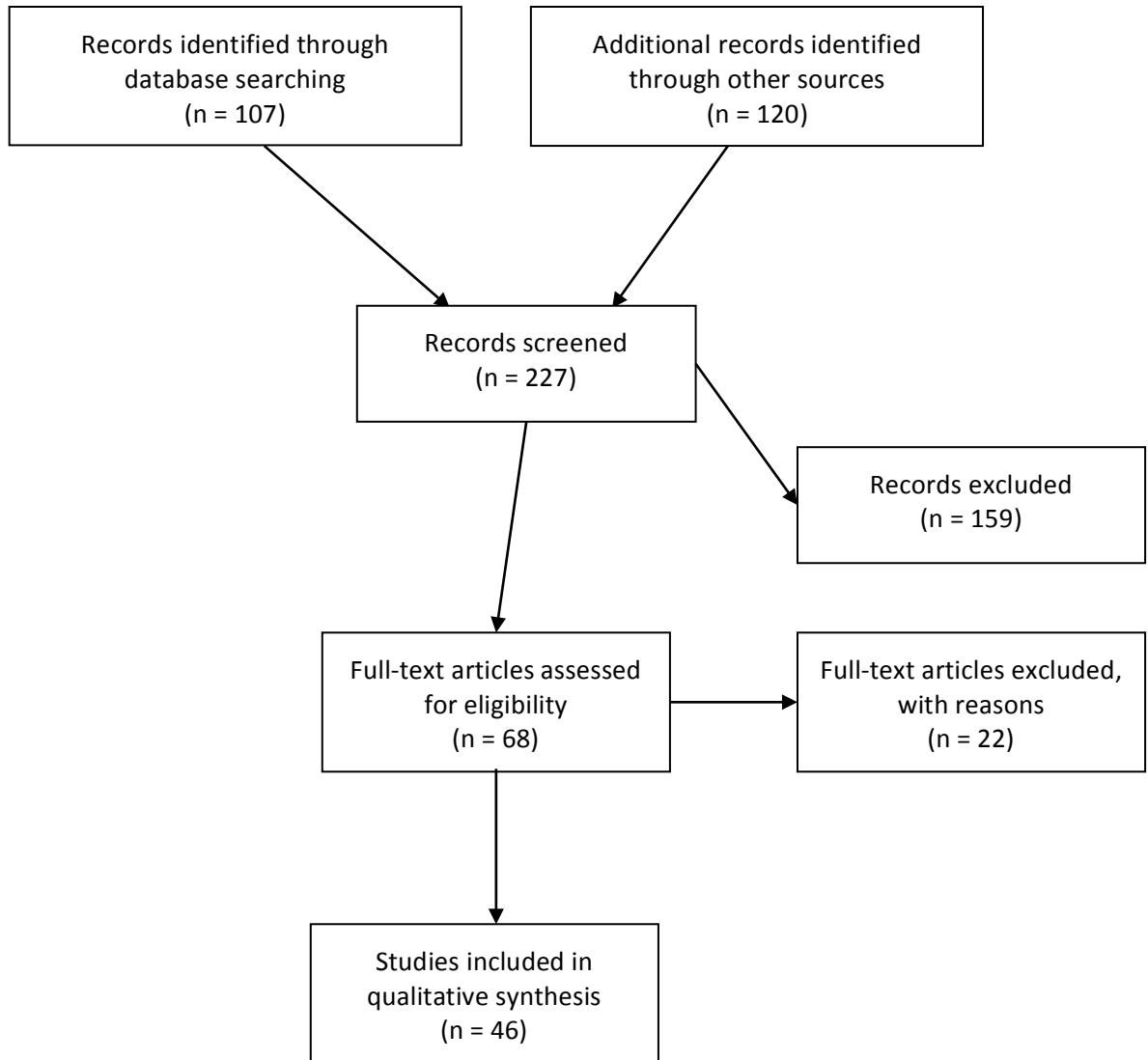
The archaeological remains of past civilizations in Italy are vast, yet they are non renewable. The destruction of this heritage in Italy will not stop while scholars keep debating; on the contrary, Italy's archaeological resources will keep disappearing. As such, it is imperative for criminologists to contribute. *Tombaroli* might be now in decline and for the first time in their history their activity might be dying out due to a lack of continuity between generations, but some of the interviewed looters stated that they have no intention of stopping. Even though looting will probably never be as profitable as it was during the great raid, there are many archaeological remains still to be found in Italy, and this treasure still

motivates *tombaroli*. Although David's (2007) *Washington Post* article referred to the demise of *tombaroli*, she still chose to end her piece with the *tombarolo* Pietro Casasanta's words: "The interest in archaeology never fades... We'll be back". In fact, as this dissertation has proved, *tombaroli* never left.

Whether Italy's archaeological treasures are to be discovered by *tombaroli* or archaeologists cannot be predicted. However, readers should now be sure that the ideal scenario for those pieces is to rest peacefully in their tombs until a trained archaeologist excavates and preserves them for posterity.

APPENDIX A

IDENTIFICATION, SCREENING, ELIGIBILITY AND INCLUSION OF ARTICLES IN THE SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW⁶



⁶ Adapted from Moher, D., Liberati, A., Tetzlaff, J. & Altman D.G. (2009).

APPENDIX B

RESPONDENT DATA

Name of respondent (pseudonym)	Date of interview	Place of interview	Type of respondent
Alfredo	6/30/2017	Montefiascone	<i>Tombarolo</i>
Carlo	7/22/2017	Cerveteri	Archaeologist
Roberto	6/30/2017	Rome	Criminologist
Linda	4/12/2017	Rome	Journalist
Rodolfo	3/28/2017	Rome	Police officer
Tristano	4/18/2017	Naples (via email)	Archaeologist
Gennaro	4/24/2017	Montalto di Castro	<i>Tombarolo</i>
Gemma	4/24/2017	Montalto di Castro	Writer
Giorgio	5/22/2017	Cerveteri	Police officer
Giovanni	3/29/2017	La Giustiniana	<i>Tombarolo</i>
Patrizio	3/29/2017	La Giustiniana	<i>Tombarolo</i>
Maffio	2/10/2017	Rome	Police officer
Riccardo	2/10/2017	Rome	Police officer
Enrico	12/21/2016; 2/10/2017	Rome	Police officer
Alessio	7/1/2017	Cerveteri	<i>Tombarolo</i>
Andrea	1/27/2017	Rome	Archaeologist
Luca	1/27/2017	Rome	Expert
Lucia	7/22/2017	Cerveteri	Archaeologist
Leonardo	7/22/2017	Cerveteri	Archaeologist
Angelo	7/22/2017	Cerveteri	Archaeologist
Carla	3/28/2017	Rome	Archaeologist
Figaro	4/10/2017	Rome	Archaeologist
Bartolo	1/19/2017	Olgiate	Prosecutor
Giuseppe	12/28/2016	Rome	Journalist
Angelo ⁷	5/22/2017	Cerveteri	<i>Tombarolo</i>

⁷ The old *tombarolo* was not interviewed, as his understanding of the questions was severely impaired due to age and education.

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE USED WITH *TOMBAROLI*

List of interview questions – *tombaroli*

Introduction

1. Could you tell me about your social and professional background?
2. How would you describe the current state of archaeological looting perpetrated by *tombaroli* in Italy?

Organized crime

3. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “There is a relationship between traditional Italian organized crime and *tombaroli*”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Please comment on your answer.

4. Have you worked with or witnessed any relationship between *tombaroli* (yourself or others) and
 - 4a. Cosa Nostra?
 - 4b. Camorra?
 - 4c. ‘Ndrangheta?
 - 4d. Sacra Corona Unita?
 - 4e. Smaller, lesser-known groups (such as Stidda, smaller clans...)?
 - 4f. In case the interviewee has witnessed any kind of relationship, can he/she provide data (news, court case....)?
5. Do you share/agree you possess the following traits?

Mandatory criteria	Yes/No	Cases
Collaboration among more than two people		
Extending over a prolonged or indefinite period		

Suspected of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a more serious penalty		
Central goal of profit and/or power		
Optional criteria		
Specialized division of labor		
Exercising measures of discipline and control		
Employing violence or other means of intimidation		
Employing commercial business-like structures		
Participating in money laundering		
Operational across national borders		
Exerting influence over legitimate social institutions		

6. Continuing with the same question, do you share/agree you possess the following traits?

Item	Yes/No	Cases
Planning of their operations		
Skills and knowledge needed		
Uniforms		
Tattoos		
Initiation rituals		

7. Which of these structures would you consider describe better the organization of *tombaroli*?

Freelance	Family business	Communal business	Corporations

Organizational elements

8. Do you work by yourself or are you organized with other *tombaroli*?

8a. If so, how do you usually organize?

8b. What made you choose this particular form of organization?

8c. Has it always been like this or has the organization morphed over the years?

8d. If it has morphed, has it been due to past experience, new information/mistakes or to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents?

9. Did someone recruit you? Do you perform recruiting functions? How does recruiting work?

10. What type of position do you hold relative to other members?

10a. How many levels of hierarchy exist within the organization?

10b. Do subordinates operate by following orders or are these just suggestions passed between friends/colleagues?

10c. Are orders generally disregarded or obeyed?

11. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “These responses are generalizable to *tombaroli* around Italy”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Organizational learning and information gathering

12. What do you know about apprenticeships within new *tombaroli*? Do they exist?

13. Which tasks would you consider require an experimental or intuitive knowledge, and which ones you would consider require an abstract technical knowledge?

Task	Metis	Techné

14. How do you obtain, record, and store information?

14a. What is the format used to do so?

14b. Do all participants in the group have access to this information?

14c. If there is one person managing the group, does he use this information?

14d. How often is this information accessed?

Adapting

15. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* adjust their behavior in response to past experience or new information/mistakes”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Can you cite specific examples?

16. Following up from the last question, to what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* just react to events in a random, haphazard fashion”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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17. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* adapt their activities in response to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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18. If you adjust your behavior in response to experience or information, do you store this new information? How?

19. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* are more efficient in their task nowadays than they were in the past”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Conclusion

20. Is there anything not discussed during the interview that you consider is important to be considered and included in this research?

21. Could you name which cases, in your opinion, constitute the most important operations against tomb raiding in your country?

Snowball sampling recruitment

22. Can you suggest anyone else whom you think it would be useful for me to talk to about this topic?

APPENDIX D

QUESTIONNAIRE USED WITH OTHER RESPONDENTS

List of interview questions – police officers, magistrates, prosecutors, archaeologists and journalists

Introduction

1. Could you tell me about your professional background?
2. How would you describe the current state of archaeological looting perpetrated by *tombaroli* in Italy?

Organized crime

3. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “There is a relationship between traditional Italian organized crime and *tombaroli*”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	NA
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4. Have you witnessed any relationship between *tombaroli* and
 - 4a. Cosa Nostra?
 - 4b. Camorra?
 - 4c. ‘Ndrangheta?
 - 4d. Sacra Corona Unita?
 - 4e. Smaller, lesser-known groups (such as Stidda, smaller clans...)?
 - 4f. In case the interviewee has witnessed any kind of relationship, can he/she provide data (news, court case....)?

5. Have you observed in *tombaroli* the following traits?

Mandatory criteria	Yes/No	Examples/Comments
Collaboration among more than two people		
Extending over a prolonged or indefinite period		
Suspected of committing serious criminal offences, punishable by imprisonment for at least four years or a		

more serious penalty		
Central goal of profit and/or power		
Optional criteria		
Specialized division of labor		
Exercising measures of discipline and control		
Employing violence or other means of intimidation		
Employing commercial business-like structures		
Participating in money laundering		
Operational across national borders		
Exerting influence over legitimate social institutions		

6. Continuing with the same question, have you observed in *tombaroli* the following traits?

Item	Yes/No	Examples/Comments
Planning of their operations		
Skills and knowledge needed		
Uniforms		
Tattoos		
Initiation rituals		

7. Which of these structures would you consider describe better the organization of *tombaroli*?

Freelance	Family business	Communal business	Corporations

Organizational elements

8. Based on your experience, do you consider that tomb raiding is an individual task or an organized one?

8a. If so, and in your experience, how do *tombaroli* organize?

8b. Based on your experience, what circumstances made them choose that particular form of organization?

8c. Has it always been like this, or has the organization morphed over the years?

8d. If it has morphed, has it been due to past experience, new information/mistakes, or to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents?

9. Do you have any insights about forms of recruitment? Who does perform recruiting functions? How does recruiting work?

10. Do hierarchies exist within the group of *tombaroli*? How many?

10a. Do subordinates operate by following orders or are these just suggestions passed between friends/colleagues/equals?

10b. Are orders generally disregarded or obeyed?

11. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “These responses are generalizable to *tombaroli* around Italy”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Organizational learning and information gathering

12. What do you know about apprenticeships within *tombaroli*? Do they exist?

13. Which tasks would you consider require an experimental or intuitive knowledge and which ones you would consider require an abstract technical knowledge?

Task	Metis	Techné

Task	Metis	Techné

14. How do *tombaroli* obtain, record, and store information?
 14a. What is the format used to do so?
 14b. Do all participants in the group have access to this information?
 14c. If there is one person managing the group, does he use this information?
 14d. How often is this information accessed?

Adapting

15. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* adjust their behavior in response to past experience or new information/mistakes”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Can you cite specific examples?

16. Following up from the last question, to what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* just react to events in a random, haphazard fashion”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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17. To what extent would you agree with the following statement: “*Tombaroli* adapt their activities in response to perceived or actual threats from law enforcement agents”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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18. If *tombaroli* adjust their behavior in response to experience or information, do you think they store this new information? How?

19. To what extent would you agree about the following statement: “*Tombaroli* are more efficient in their tasks nowadays than they were in the past”?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral/Indifferent	Agree	Strongly agree	N/A
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Conclusion

20. Is there anything not discussed during the interview that you consider it is important to be considered and included in this research?

21. Could you name which cases, in your opinion, constitute the most important operations against tomb raiding in your country?

Snowball sampling recruitment

22. Can you suggest anyone else within the legal (a colleague) or illegal sphere (*tombaroli*) that you think it would be useful for me to talk to about this topic?

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