

ing of *gestión* (management) requires a dispassionate and primarily realistic approach; that approach is to be found in the pages of this book.

I would like to conclude by pointing out that the main contribution of this work is to emphasize the narrow relationship between democracy, diversity, and museums. The knowledge of the plural, heterogeneous, and complex nature of the democratic Spain demands that we “go beyond the Prado—to any randomly chosen museum anywhere in any of the seventeen regions—to grasp the power of this phenomenon” (p. 199). How better to close this reflection than with the words of the author: “the role of the museum as institution in constructing the identity of the present-day Spaniard is richer, more reciprocal, and more varied than it has ever been before” (p. 199).

Colin Renfrew, *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (Duckworth Debates in Archaeology) Duckworth, London 2000. ISBN 0-7156-3034-2. £9.99.

Neil Brodie, Jenny Doole, and Peter Watson, *Stealing History: The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material*. McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge 2000. ISBN 1-902937-10-4. £8.00.

Neil Brodie, Jennifer Doole, and Colin Renfrew (eds.), *Trade in Illicit Antiquities: The Destruction of the World's Archaeological Heritage* (McDonald Institute Monographs). McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research, Cambridge 2001. ISBN 1-902937-17-1. £25.00.

Reviewed by Daniel Graepler*

For many years, issues surrounding the worldwide problem of illegal excavations and illicit trade in archaeological artifacts have been most actively debated in the United States. Recently, however, Britain has become an increasingly active contributor to these discussions. If it can be said that the tone of Britain's contributions was once set primarily by representatives of the London antiquities trade, then it is also the case, at least since the “Sotheby's affair,” that critics of the status quo have now gained the upper hand.¹ The most important political result of this shift was the decision of the British government, announced in March 2001, to sign the UNESCO Convention of 1970. Although the concrete legislative measures that will follow from this resolution remain unclear, there is no question that the announcement carries great political importance. With this decision, Europe's arguably most important “market nation” has broken ranks with the opposition

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front against the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions, an opposition still composed of almost all non-Mediterranean European countries.

Without a doubt, this change of direction in British politics is due largely to the efforts of one of the country's most prominent archaeologists, Colin Renfrew. As a member of the British House of Lords, he enjoys not only international academic esteem, but also political influence. In recent years Lord Renfrew's myriad publications and organizing activities have established an entirely new institutional basis for fighting the "trade in illicit antiquities." In 1996 he established the Illicit Antiquities Research Center (IARC), which operates through the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research in Cambridge, also founded under his direction. The IARC is a research group dedicated exclusively to the problem of the destruction of archaeological resources. The results of its efforts are published in the journal *Culture without Context*.²

The three publications here under review—a monographic treatise, an educational exhibit brochure, and the proceedings of an international scientific congress—are all products of IARC's activities. A review of these diverse publication formats reveals IARC's high level of commitment to increasing the public awareness of its cause.

Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology is the expanded version of the Twenty-first Kroon Lecture, presented by Lord Renfrew in 1999 at the Netherlands Museum voor Anthropologie en Praehistorie in Amsterdam.³ The text consists of purposefully combative rhetoric that identifies the author's position and explicitly targets several problems. The goal is "to expose the hypocrisy of institutions which legitimise and abet the looting process by the willing display of recently acquired unprovenanced antiquities" (p. 90). The destruction of the world's archaeological heritage is vividly recounted in seven succinct, easy-to-read chapters. Lord Renfrew makes clear that the worst tragedy lies not in the infringement of national property laws, but rather in the irreversible loss of archaeological contexts. Through the use of a very instructive "hypothetical example" the author demonstrates the vast difference between an archaeological object documented in situ and one that appears in isolation on the international art market. What would have happened, he asks, if the Tomb of Philip in Vergina—the richest known Macedonian burial site to date—had not been excavated and recorded in minute detail by M. Andronikos and his team in 1977, but had been plundered by looters? Instead of possessing the most essential body of evidence illuminating Macedonian history of the second half of the fourth century B.C., we would only have an accumulation of precious, but isolated artifacts. These would probably reach us through an auction catalogue with forged provenience and a nondescript commentary, and we might never have discovered their common historical associations (pp. 22–24).

In chapter 4 the author uses a series of examples to demonstrate further that the simultaneous appearance of precious artifacts on the art market in the form of

“treasures” sheds very little light on their history, given that nothing else is known of their provenience or original context. Perhaps the best known of these examples is that of the particularly obscure “Sevso-Treasure” (pp. 46–50). This extensive collection of late antique silverware was claimed to have been acquired in Lebanon in 1982 by the Marquess of Northampton, but was most likely found several years before this date in Hungary.

Other selected examples include the so-called Lydian Hoard, purchased by the Metropolitan Museum in New York, and the Aidonia Treasure and serve similarly to illustrate the changing situation on the international antiquities market. Many of these treasures have been repatriated. The acquisition of spectacular archaeological finds without documented provenience has become a much greater legal risk than could have been imagined just a few years ago. Rightly, the author distances himself from the nationalistic undertones that quite frequently surround these repatriation issues. The main purpose of restitution from an archaeological perspective is to discourage the black market from dealing with looted antiquities, and thus to reduce the lure of ever more illegal excavations: “the important loss when looting occurs is indeed the loss of information as to context. The final destination of the material is ultimately a secondary consideration” (p. 45). This also means that the frequent polemical conflation of the problems inherent in illegal excavations with the question of the restitution of old museum inventory (as in the case of the Elgin marbles) is misleading (p. 78).

Although attempts to repatriate archaeological findings have been successful in several cases, many more instances of refusal to return such objects are reported. One of the most striking examples is that of the Hercules torso in the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) (pp. 32–34). Although the fragment has been proven beyond doubt to belong together with the lower part of a statue of the “resting Hercules” excavated at Perge in southern Turkey in 1981, the owners of the Boston fragment—the MFA and the collectors Leon Levy and Shelby White—refuse to give it back to Turkey. Renfrew harshly chastises the unscrupulous acquisition policy of the Boston MFA and the New York Metropolitan Museum. He also mentions the Miho Museum in Japan (pp. 73–74), which has acquired a large number of antiquities of dubious provenience in recent years. Held up as a positive example, on the other hand, is the Getty Museum acquisition policy, announced in 1995, under which only objects having a legal, clearly documented origin will be acquired. But even in this case Renfrew does not spare criticism of the museum’s inconsistency in purchasing the Lawrence and Barbara Fleischman Collection soon after articulating the new policy. Much of this significant group of antiquities is of dubious provenience (pp. 69–71). Despite this relapse, however, the Getty Museum appears to have strictly observed its new policy. Additionally, a number of spectacular repatriations initiated by the Getty serve as important signals of the new role for major museums to play in the art market.

The author devotes a separate chapter (pp. 81–89) to the protection of Britain's archaeological heritage. This focus on the national situation is useful for at least two reasons. First, it counters the popular stereotype that the plundering of archaeological sites occurs only in distant third world countries. Second, it demonstrates that the United Kingdom's nonparticipation in the relevant international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage has reciprocal consequences; while other nations lack the means to instigate the return of objects illegally exported to Britain, that country cannot fall back upon international conventions when trying to repatriate illegal exports from its own soil. As examples, Renfrew lists the cases of the Ickingham Bronzes and the Salisbury Hoard, two illegally excavated and partially exported collections of artifacts. Thus, not only the traditional source countries, but also the United Kingdom will benefit from the British signing of the UNESCO Convention. Other countries that have so far refused to ratify the UNESCO and UNIDROIT Conventions (such as Germany) would be well advised to consider this insight.

Renfrew has intended his book primarily for a British audience. His objective is to initiate a change of British policy in regard to the international protection of cultural heritage. In accordance with such a goal, this volume includes a comprehensive appendix with relevant international conventions, resolutions, codes of ethics, and legal texts. Most of these, like most of the main text, are meaningful not only for British readers but also for those in other countries and should be so noted. It is regrettable from a Central European viewpoint, however, that Renfrew does not reference discussions on this topic from beyond the English-speaking world. Citations to other international meetings are entirely absent from an otherwise very useful bibliography. The reviewer therefore takes the liberty of referencing some relevant publications.

At the 1988 Thirteenth International Congress of Classical Archaeology, leading archaeologists formulated the *Berlin Declaration on Loans and Acquisitions of Archaeological Objects by Museums*, thereby establishing a new model for cooperation between museums in market countries and various source-country heritage management agencies.⁴

Since 1993, a traveling exhibition entitled *Provenience: Unknown. Illegal Excavations Destroy the Archaeological Heritage* has been displayed in twenty European cities, accompanied by a catalogue in German and Italian.⁵

Trade in illicit antiquities has also been the subject of several conferences, most notably in Italy, but also in Germany, Austria, and Switzerland.⁶

Also deserving of mention is a series of articles on looting, later reprinted in book form, written by two French journalists of *Le Monde*.⁷ Surely, greater awareness of such activities in other countries would be in the common interest of a more efficient protection of the world's archaeological heritage.

Stealing History: The Illicit Trade in Cultural Material is a report published by IARC,

under commission from ICOM UK and the Museum Association. Although intended expressly for the British government and British museums, its style and visual presentation are also calculated to sensitize the broader public to the acute endangerment of global archaeological heritage. The brochure serves simultaneously as an accompanying catalogue for a traveling exhibition that was organized by the IARC and that is currently on display in Great Britain.

The overall aim and the details of this text resemble Renfrew's essay, but its layout and design reveal an attempt to grab the attention of even the most casual reader, who might hastily leaf through the pages. Color photos, graphs, tables, and multiple short summaries serve to quickly inform the reader.

Photographs of vandalized Buddhist statues, confiscated hoards of illegally excavated antiquities and plundered necropolises that look like lunar landscapes speak for themselves. At the same time the authors strive for an objective and factual discussion by countering unrealistically high estimates of the financial volume of illicit trading in antiquities with careful calculations of its actual extent (pp. 23–25). Also noteworthy are the data indicating just how small a fraction of the total revenue flows back to the actual looters—only 0.1 to 1.7 percent of the final sales price in the selected examples (p. 14).

Deserving special attention is the evidence that EEC regulation No. 3911/92, which should control the exports of cultural goods from EU to non-EU nations, appears to be systematically ignored in Great Britain (pp. 34–36). Two spot checks carried out in 1998 and 1999 at auctions at Bonham's in London revealed that nearly all the lots were "exempted from licensing requirements, presumably on the grounds of limited importance" (p. 35). This is in direct contradiction to the EEC regulation, which expressly refrains from providing a minimum value limit for archaeological objects. Unfortunately, the United Kingdom is not alone in this contrary administration of the EEC regulation. Other market countries also circumvent it regularly, and the European Parliament and the European Commission are working presently to remedy the situation.

Trade in Illicit Antiquities: the Destruction of the World's Archaeological Heritage is the largest and most academically significant of the three publications reviewed here. The collection consists of extensive conference proceedings arising from a 1999 meeting of over fifty international experts at the McDonald Institute, Cambridge, under the auspices of the IARC.⁸ As in the other two books, the main focus is the global scale of "trade in illicit antiquities." The individual contributions collectively document a path of destruction reaching from Southeast Asia over China, India, Pakistan, East and West Africa, Syria, Jordan, Turkey, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Belize, Peru, the United Kingdom, and the United States—and this list does not even include such heavily impacted source countries as Afghanistan, Lebanon, or Mali.

Almost all of the authors depict the situation in their country with a candid

openness and make every effort to present an objective description of the situation, even if this means criticizing the local agencies responsible for protection of antiquities. Several papers take up one of the conference's primary aims: the attempt to ascertain hard data for the purpose of placing the discussion upon a more solid empirical foundation. Observations on organizational structures, on the economic effects of looting, and on the social context of illicit trade, including the connection with drug trafficking, appear as recurring themes throughout the proceedings. Particularly elaborate statistical data are presented by some of the American authors.⁹ Elizabeth Gilgan of Boston University has analyzed both police files from Belize and Sotheby's catalogues offering pre-Columbian material from Central America (pp. 73–87). She concludes that the peak traffic in these objects occurred in 1981 but that the total number of auction offerings in the 1990s was only slightly less than in the 1980s, with an average of 1,444 and 1,514 objects auctioned by Sotheby's in the respective decades. Regulations set by the main market country, the United States, appear not to have the desired effect on the import of illegally excavated pre-Columbian artifacts. According to Gilgan, this is explained in part by the fact that the boundaries of modern states and of ancient cultural realms are not congruent. It is therefore quite difficult, and often impossible, to attribute a single artifact appearing on the international art market to a specific modern country.

Particularly instructive is a comparison of Gilgan's conclusions regarding Belize with those of Ricardo Elia concerning the trade in Apulian vases (pp. 145–53). Elia also investigated Sotheby's catalogues from past decades and presents statistical documentation of a southern Italian archaeological catastrophe analogous to that presented by Gilgan for Central America. Both reports describe a very similar picture for the 1980s, in that Sotheby's offers of Apulian vases peaked in 1984, just three years later than the peak for pre-Columbian artifacts: "only 15 percent of the Apulian red-figure vases auctioned by Sotheby's contain information about previous owners and none lists a find-spot. Sotheby's ability to offer a large steady supply of Apulian vases each year since 1966, coupled with the fact that 85 per cent of these vases have no previous ownership history, indicates that Sotheby's has had direct links to large-scale, commercial sources of undocumented Apulian vases" (p. 150).

In contrast to the pre-Columbian material, however, the Apulian vases have been seen much less frequently on the art market since 1995. It remains to be seen if this trend will continue, but some reasons for the apparent decrease in market activity can already be surmised. First, the main sources of Apulian vases in the 1980s—the necropolises of Arpi and Salapia (Province of Foggia)—seem to have been exhaustively looted. Second, the art protection unit of the carabinieri has achieved some spectacular blows against a number of smuggling organizations that shipped the artifacts from Italy into Switzerland, and from there to London, the

United States, and other countries. Other developments are also relevant. In 1997, Sotheby's discontinued its antiquities auctions in London. The United States—in response to the UNESCO Convention—initiated stricter controls regarding the import of Apulian vases and other Italian artifacts in January of 2001. Consequently, several key channels of distribution have been closed. Even beyond the small circle of experts, Apulian vases have become synonymous with illicit antiquities. Consistent with this development, the antiquities dealers who care about their reputation are beginning to distance themselves from such artifacts.

Because of its global perspective, this volume offers such an abundance of interesting details that only a few representative examples can be illustrated here. Although no corner of the globe seems to be spared from illicit excavations, the kind and intensity of looting vary considerably. In some countries looting is still a local phenomenon, not yet fueled by the demand of the international art market. In Tanzania, Kenya, and Somalia, the destructions have been more an act of vandalism and less an attempt to meet market demand. The situation in West Africa diverges from both of these models. According to Boubé Gado's detailed survey of archaeological sites in Niger (pp. 57–72), the situation in some areas there is as disastrous as in Mali. He describes impressively the dilemma that can result from trying to popularize archaeology. Between 1993 and 1998, the highly praised exhibition *Vallées du Niger* traveled not only to western Europe, but also, as the first exhibit of its kind, through the home countries of the cultures it represented: Mali, Burkina Faso, Nigeria, Mauritania, Conakry Guinea, and Niger. As a result, the demand for archeological artifacts from the Bura region of West Niger has exploded: "Looting there has caused the frenetic and systematic destruction of sites by—it is true—the poorest population in the world at the limit of its daily survival" (p. 58).

One of the many merits of this volume, especially of its African contributions, is the consideration given not only to administrative and legal matters but also to the social and cultural aspects of illicit excavations. By way of this approach, many authors reach the conclusion that, in addition to the ongoing battle against looting (guarding archaeological sites, punishing looters) and the weakening of demand (imposing international export restrictions), intensive didactic efforts are necessary in order to sensitize the local population to the value of archeological heritage. Such an undertaking must address both the intangible, identity-related benefits and the long-term material returns that can accrue to a region through the existence of archaeological parks and museums. Walter Alva's report on his experiences in Sipán (Peru) is an auspicious example of how successful this approach can be (pp. 89–96).

The contributions of P. Addyman (pp. 141–44) and of V. Canouts and F. P. McManamon (pp. 97–110) demonstrate that a tendency away from the previously lenient regulations governing their own archaeological heritage is also detectable in

the classic market countries for antiquities, Great Britain and the United States. The sharp contrast between the treatment of public and private land in the United States, however, appears paradoxical. Private land in most states is still excluded from the strict regulations applying to public land.¹⁰

An important addition to the many national studies in this volume is the article by New York lawyers H. N. Spiegler and L. M. Kaye, who specialize in “recovering cultural property on behalf of claimant governments,” especially for Turkey (pp. 121–32). They can point to a number of successful cases, like the repatriation of the “Decadrachm or Elmali Hoard” in 1999—an extremely important coin hoard which had been acquired by the American collector William Koch. The authors demonstrate that American courts are generally receptive towards nations demanding illegally taken cultural goods. The plaintiff is expected, however, to present proof beyond doubt that he or she initiated all possible police investigations as soon as the infringement of property rights became known. In addition, the illegality of the taking according to plaintiff’s own country’s laws must be unequivocally proven, a task which is not always easy to accomplish, in light of the vast differences that may exist between the judicial systems in the United States and in the plaintiff’s country. The creation of bilateral agreements under the Cultural Property Implementation Act of the 1970 UNESCO Convention can clarify many legal relations in this respect. The UNIDROIT Convention of 1995 could supply further improvements if the important market countries would accede to it. In the second part of the article, Kaye, who was a participant of the diplomatic conference on the UNIDROIT Convention in Rome, 1995, provides interesting background information on the events of this conference, which almost failed because of irreconcilable differences between source and market countries.

The volume is carefully edited and enhanced with very useful bibliographies and illustrations.¹¹ Especially noteworthy are the maps, prepared specifically for this publication, that accompany most of the nation-specific contributions.

The Cambridge Resolution is printed as an appendix. With this resolution the participants agreed upon the founding of an International Standing Conference on the Traffic in Illicit Antiquities (ISCOTIA). Its mission is summarized in ten points that proclaim a comprehensive international campaign against all levels of the trade in illicit antiquities.

With the three publications here under review, the IARC has established itself as a central point of reference in this international movement. There are good reasons to hope that the impetus received by cultural policies in Britain from the activities of Lord Renfrew and his colleagues will extend to those European nations in which the relevant debate is less advanced. The members of IARC deserve the gratitude not only of other archaeologists, but of everyone concerned with the preservation of the world’s archaeological heritage.

NOTES

1. Peter Watson, coauthor of one of the books here reviewed, has raised public awareness—and criticism of the existing situation—with popular television programs and his book *Sotbeby's—The Inside Story* (1997).
2. IARC's Internet address is <<http://www-mcdonald.arch.cam.ac.uk/IARC/home.htm>>.
3. Originally published as *Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership: The Ethical Crisis in Archaeology* (the twenty-first Kroon Lecture). (Stichting Nederlands Museum voor Anthropologie en Praehistorie, Amsterdam 1999).
4. Presented in English and German, in Congress of Classical Archaeology, *Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Klassische Archäologie* Berlin 1988, 642–43 (Zabern Mainz 1990).
5. German edition: *Fundort: unbekannt. Raubgrabungen zerstören das archäologische Erbe. Eine Dokumentation* (Biering & Brinkmann, München 1994); Italian edition: *Provenienza: sconosciuta! Tombaroli, mercanti e collezionisti: L'Italia archeologica allo sbaraglio* (Edipuglia, Bari 1996).
6. Italy: *Convegno Internazionale sul tema: Eredità contestata? Nuove prospettive per la tutela del patrimonio archeologico e del territorio, Roma, 29–30 aprile 1991* (*Atti dei convegni Lincei*, 93) (Accademia nazionale dei Lincei, Roma 1992); P. Pelagatti/M. Bell III (eds.), *Antichità senza provenienza. Atti della tavola rotonda. American Academy in Rome, 18 febbraio 1995, Bollettino d'Arte*, allegato al n. 89–90, 1995; see also P. Pelagatti/P. G. Guzzo (eds.), *Antichità senza provenienza II. Atti del colloquio internazionale, [Viterbo] 17–18 ottobre 1997, Bollettino d'Arte*, supplemento al n. 101–2 (1997) [published December 2000]. Germany: H. G. Niemeyer ed., *Archäologie, Raubgrabungen und Kunsthandel. Podiumsdiskussion auf der 23. Mitgliederversammlung des Deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes in Münster, 26. Juni 1993* (*Schriften des Deutschen Archäologen-Verbandes*, 13) (Hannover 1995). Austria: Gerte Reichelt ed., *Neues Recht zum Schutz von Kulturgut: Internationaler Kulturgüterschutz. EG-Richtlinie, UNIDROIT-Konvention und Folgerecht [Symposium Wien 1996]* (*Schriftenreihe des Ludwig Boltzmann Institutes fuer Europarecht*; 1). (Manz, Wien 1997). Switzerland: *Unidroit: Recht und Ethik im Handel mit Kulturgut. Tagung der Schweizerischen Akademie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaften (SAGW) und der Schweizerischen Ethnologischen Gesellschaft (SEG), Bern 27.6.1998.* (SAGW, Bern, 1998).
7. Emmanuel de Roux and Roland-Pierre Paringaux, *Razzia sur l'art. Vols, pillages, recels à travers le monde* (Fayard, Paris 1999).
8. Patty Gerstenblith has reported on this meeting: 9 *International Journal of Cultural Property* 166 (2000).
9. Another important quantitative study was contributed to the IARC symposium by a British team. It was not published in the conference proceedings, but rather as a separate article in this journal (Christopher Chippindale, David Gill, Emily Salter, Christian Hamilton, *Collecting the Classical World: First Steps in a Quantitative History*, 10 *International Journal of Cultural Property* 1 (2001).
10. In the words of Renfrew (*Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership*, p. 81), “One of the greatest anomalies in the archaeological world is the freedom with which a landowner in the United States may take a bulldozer to an ancient site, for instance in the American Southwest, and destroy it in order to locate ancient pots for sale.”
11. Surprisingly, G. Pastore's contribution cites no references, although parts of it are taken literally from *Provenienza sconosciuta!* *Supra* note 5.