
Rosetta

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Review: Grove L. & Thomas S. (eds), *Heritage Crime: Progress, Prospects and Prevention*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Pp. xiv & 235. £65. ISBN: 978-1-137-35750-2

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At a time when heritage is threatened throughout the world, *Heritage Crime: Progress, Prospects and Prevention* is a rather timely and potentially important book. The intended audience, based on the content and structure appears to be more for those already working in the heritage industry than a general readership.

The book is separated into two sections; 'Heritage Crime around the World' and 'Tackling Heritage Crime', with articles presented by numerous heritage experts. The introduction to the volume highlights that each country has its own problems and different legislation concerning heritage crime creating a disjointed approach to tackling it. The crimes covered by heritage legislation also vary in each country, resulting in an act being criminal in one country but acceptable in another.

The articles in section one present case studies from the Gauteng region of South Africa (Benson & Fouché), Peru (Tantaleán), forests in Finland (Laulumaa), Romania and Moldova (Musteață), and Cyprus (Hardy); each presenting a unique set of problems.

Benson & Fouché's article introduces the section with categorisations based on abstracted case studies, discussing different motivations behind heritage theft, such as theft to order, theft relevant to particular anniversaries (i.e. WWI memorabilia in 2014) as well as bronze theft for the scrap metal value. The authors then describe the process from theft to sales via fences and middle men.

Many thefts from museums, whether targeted or opportunistic, are not reported as heritage theft is not considered as important as property theft or violent crime, which is where South African budgets are diverted. This was a recurring theme through all the chapters in the first section, as many felt the police authorities did not prioritise

heritage crime. Even when arrests are made the maximum penalties are rarely given in any of the countries discussed.

There are many reasons for this lack of prioritisation. Tantaleán describes how a number of institutions were set up to protect heritage in Peru although lack of resources and conflict of interests render such institutions as inefficient.

Additional problems are on a community level with illiteracy at 7% and poverty at more than 30% resulting in a lack of interest in archaeological concerns. In addition, indigenous populations do not recognise the concept of archaeology as their ancestors are a living part of their beliefs. The authors summarise that “there are a significant number of people in society who do not know, share or simply reject the issue of archaeological heritage. Their lack of education but also their beliefs about the world are part of the challenge and the law must act in these sectors” (p47-8).

A lack of resources is a feature of Laulumaa’s discussion in relation to the forest land in Finland, within which it is estimated 60% of archaeological sites are situated. As only 32% of the forest is owned by the government the remainder is difficult to monitor. The Finish Antiquities Act (1963/295) automatically protects an archaeological site once it has been discovered to a radius of two meters around the boundary of the site.

However, there is a limit of two years from the offence to the prosecution and due to the slow progress of legal proceedings sometimes it takes this long for prosecutors to become familiar with the law, and police investigations to be completed. As many of the archaeological sites are not visible from the surface, and as the National Board of Antiquities are slack in informing land owners of the situation, not all forest land owners know the sites are there. The official records are not regularly updated and the archaeological site lists are often simply lists of co-ordinates. The author comments that although information is available it “can be ignored if one does not know how to use [it].”(63)

All of these basic problems of record keeping, lack of personnel, resources and interest are exacerbated by political problems and this is the focus of the final two chapters of the first section.

Musteață compares policies and success in repatriating illicitly acquired artefacts from Romania (part of the EU) and Moldova (an EU aspirant). He demonstrates that Romania attempts to uphold the laws in place and to recover items exported illegally whereas the Moldovan authorities “have little interest in such cases” (76).

The situation is further discussed in the rather disheartening chapter discussing the conflict between the Turkish-Cypriots and the Greek-Cypriots, which manifests itself in destruction and intentional neglect of traditional Greek-Cypriot heritage. Although both regions have heritage laws in place, all are regularly bent, misinterpreted or simply ignored resulting in irreparable damage to the sites and illegal exportation of artefacts.

In the Turkish-Cypriot area there is the additional problem of organised criminal gangs infiltrating the government which then offers protection against prosecution. The author gives an example where a gang were arrested for possessing illicit items but were released whereas the undercover agent who identified them was imprisoned and beaten so badly he suffered a fatal heart attack.

The second section of the book discusses how to prevent all of the problems discussed in the first section. Grove and Pease offer practical advice for heritage sites to protect themselves from crime, using a combination of security such as stronger locks, providing they do not damage the site further; nudging visitors to think twice before committing a crime, by such means as placing notices stating there are RFID tags on artefacts (even if there are not) or careful placement of high risk objects enabling them to be monitored not just by staff but also by the general public.

The main emphasis of this chapter is on sharing information about successful crimes carried out from both heritage and non-heritage sites as sometimes the crimes, as well as the crime-prevention toolkit, are the same.

Price then offers advice on the more specialised crime of stealing lead from churches, primarily in the United Kingdom. The theft of lead has increased in the last decade due to the rise in the cost of scrap metals. Clarke (1999) introduced the CRAVED model to explain why certain places are targeted for metal theft. Concealable, Removable, Available, Valuable, Enjoyable, Disposable. In the case of

lead thefts, the key factors are availability, value and disposability. Most targeted churches were 'isolated', 'unoccupied' (i.e. at night), undergoing renovation and with easy access to the roof (p. 138). By making it more difficult to access the roof, by locking gates, chaining up wheelie bins, and fitting alarms to scaffolding the church could prevent the thefts.

Whereas Price offers very practical hands-on prevention advice, Wennberg, in his discussion of heritage crime in Norway, suggests that better communication between different government departments enabling people to know their rights when wishing to convert listed buildings or build on protected land, as well as who they should contact upon the discovery of some archaeological finds could improve the situation. At present, lack of information (whether genuine or perceived) is often used as an excuse once arrests are made. Law enforcement agencies are also complacent because "Heritage crimes are labour intensive and it is important that resources are not wasted on cases which in the end lead to nothing" (163).

Volgraff presents an image of overwhelming hopelessness in the chapter on control of heritage crime in southern Africa. Whilst all the countries have laws in place to prevent and punish heritage crime, these are often out of date (dating to the Colonial era), not enforced, overly broad or when arrests are made prosecutions do not occur. Two major problems in preventing and prosecuting heritage crime is lack of knowledge and expertise on behalf of the police, and economics, as often poverty leads to the crimes as well as to the authorities turning a blind eye.

As with the other countries cited throughout this volume, education on the value of heritage is regarded as the best means of preventing heritage crime. Whilst the reviewer personally believes this may work with *some* people, there will be others who simply do not care about ancient sites, finding them irrelevant to modern life. Using the USA and UK as examples Shelbourn takes the idea of learning of the value of heritage sites further.

The USA introduced the practice of having archaeologists as expert witnesses in heritage crime court cases describing and evaluating the damage caused in the same manner a victim would evaluate an injury. In the same manner that injury claims have a monetary value attached to losing a limb for example, the archaeologists do the same for the damaged sites. In the UK, the authorities are

following this idea to a certain extent and provide a Heritage Crime Impact Statement outlining the potential cost, in financial and historical terms, of the damage. Unfortunately, this system cannot be used for conviction, only for sentencing. Heritage Crime, in both the USA and UK, rarely results in incarceration, however - often only a fine, or community service.

Most heritage thefts end up on the illegal market, which Polk discusses in detail looking at looting and illegal excavations all over the world. He focuses on situations arising from political upheavals such as those recently seen in Libya, Egypt, Syria and Iraq where, in the aftermath of the political problems, the resources are simply not available to protect heritage sites. However, the data available severely underestimates the extent of the illicit trade. The author believes it is important to improve the record gathering methods in order to fully understand the size and shape of the problem.

The volume ends with a summary of the articles by the editors, and tries to put a positive slant on the subject. The editors believe the way forward is through education, not only of policing authorities but also of heritage employees and the public. Interdisciplinary cooperation and the sharing of statistics could all aid in the prevention of heritage crime.

There is no doubt that this subject is an important one, and this book is an interesting contribution to the prevention of heritage crime, but the reviewer suspects that it will very quickly become outdated, as crimes, technology and legislation put in place to combat heritage crime will change, meaning this volume may not be relevant in years to come.