

Cultural Heritage Management: A Global Perspective.* Phyllis Mauch Messenger and George S. Smith, eds. Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2010. 319 pp.

Reviewed by Jessica Zimmer

The purpose of *Cultural Heritage Management: A Global Perspective* is to look at strategies to categorize and protect cultural heritage from a variety of countries around the world. The volume focuses on material cultural heritage, especially artifacts recovered from archaeological sites. The authors have chosen this focus because the book arose from discussions lasting almost three decades. The conversations began in the early 1980s and lasted until the late 2000s and were centered at annual Society for American Archaeology (SAA) conferences.

The book contends that many countries have management practices that are transitioning out of colonial and communist models. Further improvement is necessary, however, to change these nations' ideas about cultural heritage management. The ultimate goal is to make collection warehouses, libraries of records, and museums into accessible, organized institutions. Despite their problems, all of the countries reviewed in this volume have come a long way since the middle 20th century. This has happened because of their recent use of computers and electronically-stored information. Furthermore, countries can continue to improve their cultural heritage management systems by developing appropriate legislation and increasing funding.

The book begins with a series foreword by Paul Shackel, director of the Center of Heritage Resource Studies at the University of Maryland. Shackel states that "representation and inclusiveness" are important issues in today's global arena (p. ix). The book divides the discussions of the management practices into 21 discrete chapters. The authors of these chapters are cultural heritage management professionals, and include David Morgan, Nick Petrov, Hester Davis, Maria Luz Endere, Jorge Silva, Cheng Shen, and Hong Chen. Most of the chapters are about specific countries and their heritage management programs.

The book tends to focus on larger countries, such as China, South Africa, and Brazil, although Thailand and Poland are also covered. There is a chapter on Europe as a whole, and a chapter on funding strategies for World Heritage Sites in the least developed countries. The book also contains several chapters focused on laws, funding, the destruction of cultural heritage, and institutions. The work will be of interest to cultural anthropologists, archaeologists, museum professionals, students in the social sciences, government workers, staff members of non-profit organizations concerned with cultural heritage, and lawyers with an interest in cultural heritage.

The first impression one gets upon opening the book is that it is a limited, extremely dense survey of existing management practices. It is not easy to move from one chapter to the next. It is better to read one chapter, take some time to process it, and read another chapter later. The chapters on countries review many of the same subtopics: the historical development of a management system, the existing laws, training and education for cultural heritage management professionals, and challenges. This makes the work an extremely useful resource with which to

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compare different management systems. The book contains theoretical analysis and models for better management practices.

The authors showcase the unique successes and failures in cultural heritage management of each country. The site museums of Peru were created to give governments and cultural groups a controlling presence at archaeological sites. These museums have also increased educational and work opportunities near archaeological sites. In Thailand, in one instance, the perception of the government's actions in cultural heritage management impeded restoration. In the mid 1990s, there was a protest in Lopburi Province regarding an ancient monument. The government's Office of Archaeology had proposed to disassemble the monument so it could restore the monument. Many members of the local population did not believe the government would put the monument back together. They saw the act of disassembling the monument as destruction. They were upset with the proposed action because they saw the monument as having great spiritual value.

The effects of different management practices offer possibilities as to what one country may gain from adopting another country's strategy. Yet the sections on each country's current laws and practices indicate that countries are now looking within to solve cultural heritage management problems. Often, regrettably, countries do not appear to be using books such as these which compare their practices to help actors develop policy and to manage cultural heritage better.

The United States is the only country in the book that is discussed in two chapters. These chapters are about Native American cultural heritage and North American cultural heritage. The discussion of the majority population's cultural heritage and a minority population's cultural heritage could be juxtaposed better. The United States has two different sets of laws that affect the cultural heritage of different populations. This indicates that America has two distinct perceptions of cultural heritage, which are tied to race and ethnicity. The two perceptions may never merge.

The book calls for more laws and resources to stop looting, destruction, antiquities forgery, and bureaucratic inactivity. The book could do more to show how these processes affect representation and inclusiveness. In future volumes regarding this topic, authors should include examples of how an archaeological site's destruction has undermined a local economy. They might consider showing how a national bureaucracy's failure to allow access to ancient manuscripts has halted intellectual curiosity about these resources.

In so many books and articles, cultural heritage management professionals repeat the idea that activities such as looting and destruction are wrong. In my view, it is time for books such as this one to show how these activities have negatively affected national and foreign perceptions of a country's past. For example, in the 2000s, Taliban groups in Afghanistan destroyed many Buddhist statues. This destruction negatively impacted how people throughout the world saw Afghanistan and Muslims.

After reading the book, I have a better idea of how to learn more about global cultural heritage management. The three keys seem to be travel, detailed examination of different national databases of cultural heritage, and review of each country's applicable legislation. I would have

liked for this book to focus more on people and action, and less on legislation and mission statements. It is frustrating for the reader, as it appears to have been for the authors, to review so many unrealized or underfunded idealistic plans. Peter Stone, former chief executive officer of the World Archaeological Congress, wrote (p. xii) in the foreword of this book, “It will not be the final, definitive guide to this work.”

I have a final, additional recommendation for the authors of this book and of books similar to it. Discussions of how public education and media attention are addressing and impacting cultural heritage management would be very useful. Social campaigns against destruction and looting may be more effective than increasing funding and creating laws. This collection implies that cultural heritage management should be accomplished by professionals, but interested non-specialists make important contributions to professionals’ efforts. Books such as *Cultural Heritage Management: A Global Perspective* can be more than “snapshots” of national policies. They can be yearbooks. Books such as *Cultural Heritage Management* can document the increasing interactions between cultural heritage management professionals and the people to whom the heritage belongs.

Jessica Zimmer is a Florida-licensed attorney with a Master of Science in Anthropology from Florida State University. One of her areas of interest is the study of museums and community. She has previously worked for the Southeast Archaeological Center of the National Park Service in Tallahassee, Florida, as well as NASA – Kennedy Space Center.