

**Maxwell L. Anderson, *Antiquities: What Everyone Needs to Know*.** New York: Oxford University Press, 2017. ISBN (pbk): 978-0-19-061493-5; (hbk): 978-0-19-061492-8. 250 pages. Bibliography, Index.

Interest in the destruction of heritage around the world appears to be on the rise, fueled by mainstream media accounts of looting and destruction of artifacts and sites in many parts of the world, especially in conflict zones such as Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria. Media accounts rarely provide substantial background to issues related to the antiquities, however, especially in regard to regulations and issues related to their protection, curation, and ongoing debates in the arenas of archaeology, art history, and museum studies. This void is problematic for people wishing background on the issues without delving deep into the published scholarship. *Antiquities: What Everyone Needs to Know*, by Maxwell L. Anderson helps to fill this void – providing a concise primer.

The objectives of the book are laid clear in the opening pages, such as the book being “...offered up as a toolkit to help the reader develop informed opinions when confronted about information about the past – whether during a visit to a museum, monument, or archaeological site, while reading a news item, or upon encountering an archaeological artifact for sale” (p xv), and after mentioning artifacts on the black market, the Taliban and Islamic State destroying monuments and selling artifacts, and the wanton destruction of monuments and temples in Syria and Iraq, states “This book is intended for any reader curious about the world behind these dramatic headlines” (p xx).

*Antiquities: What Everyone Needs to Know* is aimed at more than curious readers looking for backstories to headlines. It is part of the Oxford University Press’s “What Everybody Needs to Know” series, which they describe as offering “a balanced and authoritative primer on complex current events and countries....(in a format) ideal for college students, professionals, and inquiring minds.”

As a holder of a Ph.D in art history who has held teaching positions at universities, published widely, worked as curator at the Metropolitan Museum of Art and served as director at several art museums, Maxwell L. Anderson may easily be considered an authority.

The book is divided into three major parts, with a total of 17 chapters. Each chapter is structured around a question and answer format, with the number of questions in each chapter ranging from four to twelve. Each question has an answer ranging from one to several paragraphs. There are 129 questions and answers in total.

The book is divided into three major parts. Part I, “Legal and Practical Realities”, includes five chapters. Chapter 1 (Defining Antiquities) establishes some basic terminology and issues, with questions such as “How is archaeological material defined?”; “How is ancient art defined?; “How do different countries define

antiquities?” and “How do scholars define antiquity differently from culture to culture?”. The second chapter (Cultural Ownership: Past and Present) includes several questions, such as “Why does a modern nation have a claim to an ancient culture?” Chapter 3 (Framing Today’s Debate) focuses on the key issues surrounding ownership, and Chapter 4 (The Cosmopolitan Argument) brings to light issues related to the value of artifacts without provenance. Chapter 5 (Divining Originals, Pastiches, and Forgeries) is concerned with authenticity and how it is determined.

Part II, “Settled Law and Open Questions” also has five chapters. Chapter 6 (International Conventions and Treaties) and Chapter 7 (National Laws and Statutes) focus on international and national regulations respectively. Chapter 8 (Modern National Identities) examines the relationship between antiquities and the state. Chapter 9 (Chance Finds, Excavation, and Looting) focuses on how nations deal with chance finds and looting, including shipwrecks, and Chapter 10 (Acquiring Antiquities in the Marketplace) poses questions about how antiquities are marketed, in both the legal and illicit arenas.

Part III, “Scenarios and Solutions”, consists of seven chapters. Chapter 11 (Realities of Storage, Dispersal and Display) and Chapter 12 (Capturing Antiquity: Documentation) focus on questions relating to the curation and display of objects and the documentation of those objects respectively. Replication of ancient objects is the topic of Chapter 13, focusing on the replication of objects, past and present, and includes the question “Can replicas substitute for originals?” Chapter 14 (Retention, Restitution, and Repatriation) defines these terms, discusses the Parthenon Marbles, “safe harbor”, and “orphaned antiquities”, and includes such questions as “Are antiquities better off staying put or circulating?” Chapter 15 (The Prospect of an Enlarged Legal Market) focuses on the arguments for and against an expanded legal market for antiquities, and Chapter 16 (Evolving Perspectives on Ownership) covers issues relating to increasing restrictions, differences between ownership and stewardship, and leasing. The last chapter in the book (Looking Ahead) focuses on the potential impact of new technologies, and attitudes about the antiquities market and interest in the past.

Footnotes are used throughout the chapters, and the book has an extensive bibliography. Since the bibliography is organized by chapter, it could effectively be used as source of further reading on the topics.

There are several things to like about this book. It will be useful for a variety of readerships: for the generally educated public it will be useful as a primer on heritage regulations and issues and for those in the archaeology, art, and museums world, as a quick and simple reference.

The book is genuinely global in scope, both in its using examples from countries throughout the world, and its considerable referencing to international regulations such as the UNIDROIT “Convention on the International Return of Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects,” and multiple UN instruments including the “Convention

on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Illicit Import, Export, and Transfer of Ownership of Cultural Property”, the “Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict”, the “Convention on the Law of the Sea”, and the “Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage.”

I also like that the book gives considerable attention to underwater heritage, which due to increasing technology and generally weak protection or enforcement is becoming increasingly susceptible to looting, including by corporations. As pointed out in the book, UNESCO estimates that there are three million shipwrecks around the world.

Another positive is that the book is written effectively and informatively and should appeal to those looking for concise, yet clear and substantive answers to key issues regarding antiquities.

There are a few weaknesses, which mostly come from my perspective as an archaeologist. In my view, the book is clearly written from the perspective of someone more familiar with the world of art museums and marketing antiquities than archaeology. I find Anderson’s several paragraph description of the process of archaeological work (in Chapter 1) weak. I think he seriously oversimplifies and misleads on the goals of field archaeology and overstates differences between archaeologists and art historians. Also, although the book defines “archaeological material” as being at least 250 years old (based on a legally binding definition in the United States), this is only one of many definitions, and one I believe few archaeologists accept or use in practice. But these are relatively minor points, and do not take away from the book. More importantly, I think the book would have benefitted from including principles or codes of ethics of various associations of archaeologists around the world, which generally support stewardship of cultural remains, but not commercialization.

It would also have been good had the book gestured more at antiquities in the time period before civilizations arose about 5,000 years ago. The archaeological record extends more than two million years into the past, yet the artifacts and art from all those living before that time and those living in non-agricultural communities in more recent times receive little explicit consideration. The looting and destruction of remains from these people is also an ongoing problem with consequences and are regulated by international, national, and other regulations.

In conclusion this book meets its objective in providing a primer on issues relating to antiquities around the world. I imagine it will find a home on the bookshelves of the generally interested public as well as university students and scholars; and deservedly so.

ROBERT MUCKLE  
CAPILANO UNIVERSITY  
bmuckle@capilanou.ca