in the Introduction. Still, it is a provocative and useful popular science book. I look forward to a revised second edition.

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CAVEAT EMPTOR

RHODES (R. F.) (ed.) *The Acquisition and Exhibition of Classical Antiquities. Professional, Legal, and Ethical Perspectives*. Pp. xii + 175, ills. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007. Paper, US$25. ISBN: 978-0-268-04027-4.

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This well edited and well-focused volume, considering the acquisition and exhibition of classical antiquities in the USA, was written against a background of two major initiatives by Italian cultural and legal authorities. The first was the very public and reluctant return, by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and the Getty Museum in Los Angeles and by other American collections, of antiquities which had been looted from Italy in recent years. The second was the trial in Rome of Marion True, former curator of antiquities at the Getty, on charges relating to their acquisition. The book is the product of a conference held at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana in February 2007, and it has been published with commendable promptitude.

Both the meeting and the volume take the form of a debate, in which a number of perspectives in turn is offered, each followed by a briefer comment, generally offering a different point of view. The well-informed contributions, and the calm tone of discussion, give as balanced an overview of this difficult field as is currently available. Clearly one of the starting points for the volume was the shock which followed the theft of important antiquities from the Corinth Museum and their subsequent recovery in the United States. R. Rhodes, the Editor, is a current member of the Corinth Excavations of the American School of Classical Studies at Athens, and C.K. Williams II, one of the commentators, is a former Director at Corinth. One of the eight chapters, on the Illicit Greek Antiquities Trade, by N. Bookidis, deals specifically with the Corinth theft. The six ‘perspectives’ on offer are those of the art museum director, the American archaeologist, the university museum director, and the Italian archaeologist, supported by a legal perspective and an international legal perspective, both by lawyers. It is interesting to see how they line up.

There is here only one clear apologist for those museums which, like the Met. and the Getty, have shown themselves willing in recent years to buy antiquities of uncertain provenance, which have subsequently (and predictably) turned out to be looted. This contributor is the ‘art museum director’, in the person of J. Cuno, President and Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, one of the institutions which – like some other museums – has failed to exercise adequate due diligence in many of its acquisitions in recent decades. (The Art Institute over many years received from its former Chair of Board of Trustees, James Alsdorf, gifts of oriental sculptures which more scrupulous institutions would not, on ethical grounds, have felt able to accept.) Cuno writes well, setting out the case for the ‘encyclopaedic’ museum and pointing persuasively to some of the consequences of excessive nationalism in the cultural field. He is answered with clarity by M. Bell, offering the perspective of the American
archaeologist, who is warmly supported by S. Vassallo as an Italian archaeologist. Both emphasise that the acquisition of illicit antiquities by collectors and ultimately by some museums is responsible for the looting which continues to devastate archaeological sites all over the world and leads to the loss of information about human history and prehistory on a vast scale. In this critique they are effectively supported by the contributor of one of the legal perspectives on offer, P. Gerstenblith, co-chair of the American Bar Association’s Cultural Property Committee and a recognised authority on the relevant legal frameworks in the United States, which serve to limit the illicit traffic. There is also an interesting contribution, ‘Talking to the Troops about the Archaeology of Iraq and Afghanistan’, by B.C. Rose, writing both as professor of archaeology and as museum curator. Here he describes the Archaeological Institute of America’s Troops Lecture Program in which troops serving in those countries are informed about the local archaeology and the steps which they can take to help conserve it.

These essays are all very clear about their stance – whether supporting relatively unrestricted collecting by museums and collectors (as argued by Cuno) or (as outlined by Bell) for strict acquisition policies and urging respect for the 1970 Rule (named after the date of the UNESCO Convention against the Illicit Traffic in Antiquities) as advocated by the British Museum, the University Museum of Pennsylvania, the Archaeological Institute of America, and now indeed by the Getty. Two contributions take more nuanced positions, and for that reason are particularly interesting.

The first, the university museum perspective, by K. Rorschach (Director of the Nasher Museum at Duke University), is sensitive to the risk of encouraging the illicit traffic by the acquisition of unprovenanced antiquities. But she is also concerned to advance the mission of the university museum in developing good teaching collections for educational purposes. Here one cannot but agree with a point made by Cuno that the ‘source’ countries, with their enormous national collections of antiquities, could often be more generous in making some of these available overseas, for instance by gifts or loans to responsible museums. Rohrschach sees how the ‘ten year rule’ (i.e. freedom to buy anything after ten years has elapsed since its discovery), as previously advocated by the Association of Art Museum Directors (AAMD), is little more than a looter’s charter, in allowing, as it does, acquisition so soon after an act of looting. She describes her concerns in accepting in 2005 a gift to the museum of interesting Greek antiquities, some of which had been acquired in the 1970s and 1980s, and with a few entirely lacking documentation. At the time the Nasher Museum could accept the gift without breaching the recommendations of the AAMD. The Association has, however, recently changed its policy to one advocating observance of the 1970 rule. As she observes in a footnote (p. 72): ‘I must acknowledge however that under our new policies we would only be able to accept the pieces documented prior to November 17, 1970’. This contribution illustrates how influential are general policies like those of the AIA or the AAMD, and how significant the debates which surround them.

The most surprising and perhaps the most disquieting contribution, ‘Rethinking the Remedy of Return in International Law’, is by M.E. O’Connell, the holder of a Chair in Law at the University of Notre Dame. She notes the undoubted fact that widespread looting of archaeological sites and museums took place following the 2003 invasion of Iraq, followed by further damage when radical Shiite forces later took control of museums and sites, and she concludes: ‘Thus, important as return is, it might be time to re-think it in order to achieve a better balance with other valued principles, such as protection’ (p. 108). To find such an argument against their
eventual return to their homeland in relation to Iraqi antiquities, from an academic writing in the United States, who must therefore share some measure of responsibility for the events in question. I find deeply disturbing. And I say so in the disagreeable awareness that writing as a British academic I share that responsibility. But certainly I would not use the astonishing maladministration associated with those unfortunate events as an argument against the restitution of the antiquities whose looting was their immediate consequence. But her essay has a more general flaw. She does not sufficiently distinguish between the issue of antiquities looted after 1970 (the year of the UNESCO Convention) and those looted many years, perhaps decades, before. A key argument for rigour in the application of due diligence with antiquities appearing on the market since 1970 lies in the reduction in the scale of current and future looting which an embargo on such clandestine traffic might bring. The restitution argument as it applies to earlier appropriations, these having rarely been clandestine and indeed sometimes undertaken before antiquities laws were in place, is a different one. There is no merit in eliding the two, as O’Connell does.

Such debates continue, and will no doubt do so for some time to come. But there are encouraging signs, at least for this reviewer, that the tide is turning. One is the decision by the Getty Museum, little noticed in the continuing furore about the return of antiquities and the Rome trial, to adopt a rigorous and ethical acquisitions code in line with that of the AIA or the British Museum (or indeed the UK’s Ministry of Culture, Media and Sport) and observing the 1970 Rule. Here the Getty now joins those international museums which have published a well-defined acquisitions policy. One profoundly hopes that they will soon be joined by the Metropolitan Museum with its new Director, following the retirement of his antediluvian predecessor. It is surely significant that the Association of Art Museum Directors has, as noted above, recently recommended observance of the 1970 Rule. This book, therefore, is a very timely one. By its willingness to give a voice to a wide range of opinions and its steady focus upon the key issues, it may itself prove influential in the ongoing debate.

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MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

CUNO (J.) Who Owns Antiquity? Museums and the Battle over our Ancient Heritage. Pp. xl + 228, ills. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2008. Cased, £14.95, US$24.95. ISBN: 978-0-691-13712-4.
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The author of this slim study is currently President and Director of the Art Institute of Chicago, which gives an excellent idea of where the arguments put forward here are rooted. At face value this study is a polemic against those who would prevent museums like the Art Institute or, for that matter, the British Museum, museums that the author terms ‘Encyclopedic’ in their scope and coverage of past human cultures, adding to their collections. C. is persuasive about the value of the Encyclopaedic museum as a means to foster appreciation of human diversity, and few would argue with him. It is developed eloquently in the preface, in which we are presented with six loosely linked antiquities in Chicago whose ‘life stories’ are told in some detail. The punch line is that museums like the Art Institute increasingly find it impossible to