The Idea of Cultural Heritage

Revised Edition

The idea of cultural heritage has become widespread in many countries, justifying government regulation and providing the background to disputes over valuable works of art and architecture. In this book, Derek Gillman uses several well-known cases from Asia, Europe and the United States to review the competing claims that works of art belong either to a particular people and place, or, from a cosmopolitan perspective, to all of humankind. Noting the importance of cultural roles and narratives in shaping heritage, he looks at the ways in which the idea of heritage has been constructed. He focuses first on Britain and the writings of Edmund Burke and then on China and its medieval debate about the nature of “our culture”. Drawing on a range of sources, including the work of Ronald Dworkin, Will Kymlicka and Joseph Raz, Gillman relates debates about heritage to those in contemporary political philosophy and offers a liberal approach to moral claims and government regulation.

Derek Gillman is Executive Director and President of the Barnes Foundation. A former president of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, deputy director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and keeper of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, he is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and is currently President of the International Cultural Property Society.
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DEREK GILLMAN
In memory of my parents, Esther and Abraham Gillman,
and Stephen E. Weil
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Acknowledgements

Deep thanks are due to Norman Palmer and Ruth Redmond-Cooper at the Institute of Art and Law, which first published this work. Both have played a major role in stimulating the academic study of the relationship between art and law, and the latter’s wise and careful oversight of the first edition is truly appreciated. At Cambridge University Press, I owe a particular debt to Beatrice Rehl for supporting this revised second edition; I am grateful also to James Dunn, and to Ken Karpinski for his editorial supervision.

The direct origins of this book lie in a thesis undertaken at the University of East Anglia while at the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts, under the sympathetic guidance of Gareth Miller and with the encouragement of David Pearl. The late Martin Hollis offered typically incisive comments, artfully encouraging me to think more broadly about social action. I owe an especial debt to his fellow philosopher Timothy O’Hagan, who first pointed me towards the parallels between debate in the fields of cultural heritage and contemporary political philosophy. He has continued to offer friendship and counsel as the project unfolded from thesis into book; his 1998 article ‘The Idea of Cultural Patrimony’ set a high bar for work on the subject. Stephen Urice and Stan Katz have been especially supportive, as was the late Stephen Weil. Others who have generously shared their thinking over the years include Max Anderson, Alex Bauer, Elisabeth de Bièvre, Don Caldwell, Howard Caygill, Craig Clunas, Michael Conforti, Dennis Donnelly, Alan Fern, Evelyn Friedlander, John Herring, Martha Hurt, Ian Jenkins, Jo Joslyn, Deborah Klimburg-Salter, Philip Nowlen, John Onians, Timothy Potts, Jessica Rawson, Herbert Riband Jr, Gresham Riley, Theodore Rogers,
Acknowledgements

Kim Sajet, Charles Saumarez Smith, Peter Saylor, Veronica Sekules and Diane Bernoff Sher. David Barrie, Richard Hodges, Simon Jervis, Barbara Katus, Sheryl Kessler, Johann Kräftner, Cheryl Leibold, Deborah Lenert, Jeremy Warren, Alison Whiting, Verena Widorn and Jonathan Ziss have helped me source material and images; while John Gatti, Martha Lucy, Jennifer Moszczynski and Audrey Poplawski assisted with their reactions to the Gong Kai painting in Chapter 4. The Melbourne Art Journal and the Sterling and Francine Clark Institute kindly gave permission to publish papers in Art Antiquity and Law that are incorporated into the present text. Peter Bol’s work on medieval China provided the title of Chapter 4.

With the thought that one theme of this book is relationships, I want to acknowledge my late parents as a source of inspiration; my brother for his friendship; and also my children, for their more than occasional tolerance. Finally, my gratitude to my wife Yael goes deeper than words. With abiding companionship and constant encouragement through two editions, she has made the writing of this book possible.