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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Archaeological resource management (ARM) is the practice of recording, evaluating, preserving for future research and presenting to the public the material remains of the past. Almost all countries uphold a set of principles and laws for the preservation and professional management of archaeological remains. This book offers a critical and comparative perspective on the law and professional practices of managing archaeological remains. Beginning with a global history of ARM, John Carman provides an overview of legal and professional regulations governing ARM today. He then turns to consider the main practices involved in managing archaeological remains: namely, their identification and recording, their evaluation for 'significance', their preservation and their presentation to the public. As a whole, the book offers an overview of what ARM 'does' in the world, with implications for understanding the role of archaeology as a contemporary set of practices that determine how future generations will access material remains of the past.

John Carman is Senior Lecturer in Heritage Valuation at Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage at the University of Birmingham. His authored works in the field of archaeological resource management include *Valuing Ancient Things: Archaeology and Law* (1996), *Archaeology and Heritage* (2002) and *Against Cultural Property* (2005). He has co-authored *Archaeological Practice in Great Britain* (2011) and co-edited *Managing Archaeology* (1995), *World Heritage: Global Challenges, Local Solutions* (2007), *Heritage Studies: Methods and Approaches* (2009) and *The Oxford Handbook of Public Archaeology* (2012).

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An International Perspective

JOHN CARMAN
University of Birmingham

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For Patricia, as always

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PREFACE

The management of the archaeological resource – that is, the globally applicable practices of recording, evaluating, preserving for future research and presenting to the public the material remains of the past – currently employs more professional archaeologists than any other branch of the field worldwide. It is particularly a field of increasing importance in archaeological education: specialist courses in archaeological resource management (ARM), archaeological heritage management (AHM), cultural resource management (CRM), cultural heritage management (CHM) and public archaeology (all synonyms for the same sub-field of archaeology) proliferate in universities across the globe at both the undergraduate and (especially) postgraduate levels. Almost all countries have a system in place, usually grounded in a body of legislation, for the preservation and professional management of archaeological remains. The principles upon which the management of the archaeological resource is conducted are held to be universally valid; accordingly, the basic practices of its management are also similar the world over, although specific local circumstances make for differences in approach to these common functions. Using this fact as a basis on which to start, this book offers a critical approach to the specific professional practices deriving from those agreed principles to outline how archaeological resource management is done under different conditions in different parts of the world and what these practices may mean.

This book is in some ways a companion to my earlier volume *Archaeology and Heritage* (Carman 2002), and the two can be read and used together. Whereas that book took a more 'theoretical' perspective on issues in ARM, this book addresses the common practices of ARM across the globe. In its approach it is perhaps no less 'abstract' than the earlier text – at least, in that it does not aim to offer advice or prescription on how

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ARM should be done – but it differs significantly in its structure, focus and content. Nevertheless, both books derive from teaching aspects of the management of archaeological remains over a considerable number of years, and I am sure former students may recognise in this book much that they were introduced to in lectures and seminars from 2003 (and indeed before) to the present. The justification for turning this material into a book is that there currently exists no single text providing a critical international overview of the functions of archaeological resource management. This book therefore seeks to provide what students of the field currently lack and to be a source of comparative and hopefully thought-provoking material for practitioners.

In terms of content, the book begins with an introductory overview of how the idea of preserving the remains of the past took hold, and therefore the purposes of preserving ancient objects, sites and places, emphasising the lack of intent in creating the system that exists today. It goes on to discuss the more recent developments in the field which have led to current international accord on archaeological resource management practices and the role and structure of systems of regulation – both legal and professional – to be found today. In considering these matters, the book begins from the assumption that, far from being a 'normal' or 'inevitable' set of practices, ARM as we know it has a particular form, with a particular historical trajectory, and originated from very particular historical and ideological circumstances: what we may see as ARM in the past was in fact a very different phenomenon, with very different aims and objectives sustaining it. The second and main part of the book then examines chapter by chapter the four main functions involved in managing the resource as they appear in various parts of the globe today: these are the identification and collection of remains; the assessment of value, importance and significance; the various forms that preservation and conservation of the archaeological resource may take; and finally the various issues involved in presenting the material past to a wider public. The book's concerns are limited to those directly relevant to the management of the resource, and accordingly it does not attempt to cover all aspects of archaeological excavation or prospection. A final chapter considers this 'public' face of contemporary archaeology in its wider global context.

A noticeable omission – except for occasional passing references – will be any discussion of museums. Although archaeology and museums are connected in a number of ways – museums are a common repository of material retrieved from archaeological work, they often employ archaeologists, and archaeological research is frequently conducted out of and

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on behalf of museums – they nevertheless represent quite distinct institutions. Archaeology is concerned with the study of the past through its material remains and in consequence with the processes and practices of ARM. Museums are also concerned with the collection, preservation, research and public presentation of materials, but their interests are not limited to the archaeological: many museums are devoted to other disciplines entirely, such as geology, zoology, botany and history; and for others archaeology and related fields are only one among a diversity of concerns. In terms of their recognition as areas of study, museology has a long and distinguished tradition, which has developed a huge and growing dedicated literature; ARM has a shorter period of currency as an area of study and research in its own right and a growing literature separate from that of museum studies. Treating the two areas as distinct is therefore justifiable and also serves to further promote ARM as a distinct discipline.

An overarching theme of the book – sometimes made explicit, and elsewhere running more as a subtext – is that, like it or not, ARM is as much a branch of political activity as it is anything else. The idea of ARM as a tool of 'governance' is one that has been noted especially by Laurajane Smith (2004), but it is also evident in the work of others (e.g., Firth 1995). Clues to the political nature of archaeology abound in its dependence on national law (Cleere 1989, 10; Carman 1996; Soderland 2012; Chapter 3 herein), the role of state agencies and the authority wielded by archaeologists over sites, monuments and objects in exercising their professional status. I shall aim to demonstrate how the practice of ARM represents the exercise of political authority, and to show the consequences of this for archaeology, for archaeological material and for the wider world. Although this represents a critical approach, it is not intended as an unduly negative one. My view is not that practitioners of ARM necessarily intend to be agents of political authority, but that archaeology (like any academic discipline, or any activity authorised and sanctioned by the state) is inevitably a political process. As Michel Foucault once commented (quoted in Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 187, my emphasis), 'People know *what* they do; they frequently know *why* they do what they do; but what they don't know is what what they do *does*.' My aim in this book is to go some way to giving readers an idea of what doing ARM does in the world, continuing a trend in my work to encourage matching our rhetoric to our practice. On this basis we can move forward.

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How to use this book

As a narrative text that flows in a particular direction, this book is written to be read from beginning to end. However, in recognition of the fact that books such as this are rarely approached in this way, each chapter has the capacity to stand to a large extent alone. I do, however, urge users to read each chapter in its entirety, rather than merely using it as a source of raw information. The book is designed as a critical text in every sense of the term, and there is therefore also an argument contained in each chapter that must be understood in order to appreciate how relevant information is selected and presented. For specific practices or ways of approaching the archaeological resource that do not appear in these pages but which are addressed in the literature deriving from the experience of particular regions, I ask readers to use this text as a way of understanding them in a wider context. I do not expect readers to agree with me in every respect, or even in any: however, it is in their interest that they comprehend what the book is really about.

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collecting materials for Chapters 4–7, which form the core of the volume. Tash was a keen, cheerful and convivial assistant who proved to develop a fascination for the topic of the book and did much to rekindle my own interest. For this I owe her much gratitude. I am also especially grateful to those who took the time and effort to read all or parts of the manuscript as it came hot off the printer, namely Patricia Carman, Natasha Fenston and Anna Woodham.

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