

Part III
Legal, Economic and Political
Constrains of Cultural Heritage
Preservation Programs

Part III

Legal, Economic and Political Constraints of Cultural Heritage Preservation Programs

Introduction

The third part of the book is about specific economic, political and legal concerns that applied archaeologists encounter, the relationship between business and cultural heritage research and preservation, and public interests in cultural heritage (Wheaton), the economic and political constraints in designing cultural preservation programs (Wheaton; Kobylinski), and legal aspects of cultural heritage preservation and conservation activities (King).

Thomas R. Wheaton discusses the economic and political conditions for applied archaeology in the U.S. By contrasting the private and state controlled approaches Wheaton points out the positive aspects of the for-profit solution to cultural heritage preservation and research. Within the past couple of decades it seems that many countries are coming to grips with an increasingly aware public that, quite apart from international conventions, is demanding a say in the preservation of their heritage. Many governments recognize the importance of heritage to their citizens' well-being, sense of place and self-esteem, so essential for economic and political development. Wheaton emphasizes that salvage is not conducive to good management and therefore specific modifications in the legal aspect of cultural heritage preservation seem necessary. Wheaton's conclusion is that the advantage to the United States' system is that it is flexible and ideally includes public input, but the disadvantage is that it only covers a small part of the total of cultural heritage destroyed each year.

Zbigniew Kobylinski discusses the new economic and political context that emerged in Eastern Europe since the systemic transformation of the early 1990s. He is developing an idea of preventive conservation or sustainable conservation defined as a "multi-disciplinary management to reduce the loss of cultural heritage, with the aim of benefiting the public". Preventive conservation has been recognized as a "cornerstone of any European policy of heritage preservation". Kobylinski points out that cultural landscapes are dynamic entities and therefore multivocality of cultural landscapes should be assumed.

Kobylinski also discusses the current state of applied archaeology in Poland. The country is going through a systemic change that includes modernization and development. The author examines the role of archaeology in creating cultural identities and asks the fundamental question: What is the future of cultural past under the newly emerging economic, social and political pressures?

Thomas F. King's contribution is on the most significant aspect of applied archaeology – its legal context. King points out to good and bad sides of the legal protection rules. One of the not very well understood legal constrains is that we cannot preserve everything but that preservation rules and laws are based on certain criteria. Those criteria, on the other hand, are founded on certain outlook on what matters at the time. King points out that legal systems do not protect all aspects of cultural heritage; they are set to preserve the tangible elements of the landscape, while the intangible elements which exists in human memories eventually vanish without a trace.