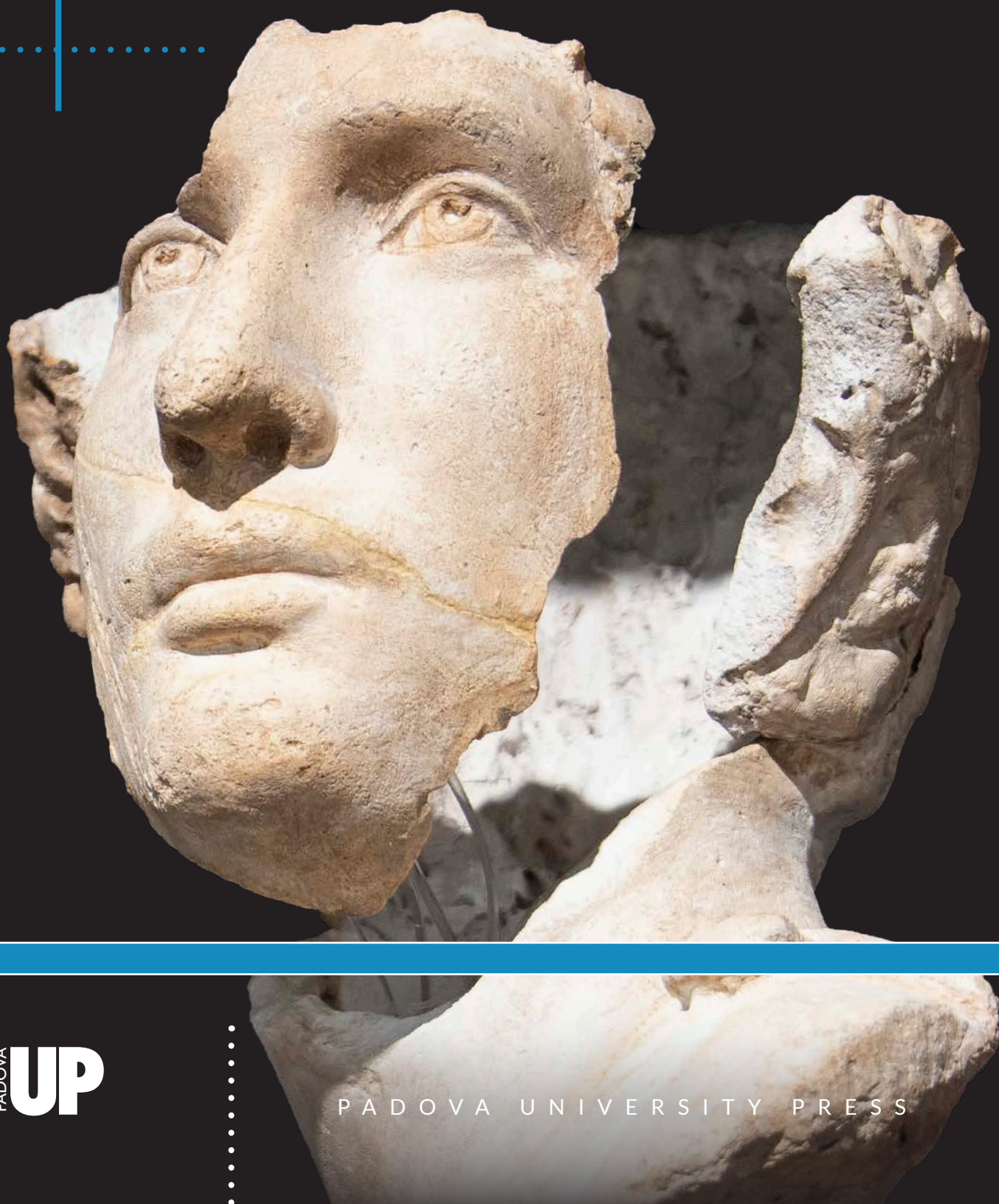# BEYOND FORGERY

## COLLECTING, AUTHENTICATION AND PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

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# BEYOND FORGERY

## COLLECTING, AUTHENTICATION AND PROTECTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Edited by

Monica Salvadori, Elisa Bernard, Luca Zamparo, Monica Baggio

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## PART 3. AUTHENTICATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE: ART HISTORICAL AND SCIENTIFIC METHODS

## PART 4. PROTECTING CULTURAL HERITAGE AGAINST FORGERY AND ILLICIT TRADE

# The Repatriation of Archaeological Property and Its Dilemmas: Reflections on the Italian Case

*Elisa Bernard**

## Abstract

Since the late nineteenth century, the protection of Italy's archaeological heritage has raised several dilemmas. The first dilemma includes the tensions between cultural property nationalism and internationalism. A second dilemma refers to the function of museums, functions which in turn might impinge on the distribution of museums on the national territory. More recently, another dilemma has surfaced that reflects the types of functions public powers should deliver in this field: protection and valorisation. Combining contextual analysis and a case study approach seems the most promising strategy to raise and discuss these dilemmas. This paper analyses the debate over the protection of the archaeological objects in post-Unification Italy to show that the State can serve multiple purposes, purposes which in turn might raise several tensions and shape the State's cultural heritage law and its preservation and valorisation policies. The paper also presents the analysis of a case study that shows the dilemmas revived by today's repatriations of archaeological property to its original national context and asks what strategies we might bring forward to negotiate these dilemmas. The paper argues that fostering transparent reinterpretation and display under the law and supporting "glocal", sustainable international loan policies may mitigate the inherent tensions cultural heritage raises for us. Replicas, digital museums, and contemporary art might further this approach.

Keywords: archaeology; repatriation; globalisation; Italy; context; museum.

## Introduction

The Italian State has attempted to protect the archaeological heritage found on its territory through law since the late nineteenth century[1]. However, the pendulum has been, and is still, swinging between cultural property nationalism and internationalism ever since.

After Law no. 364 of 20 June 1909 limited the alienability and exportation of archaeological goods and gave the State a property right over any relic found on the Italian territory after the date of the Law, cultural nationalism seemed to win the struggle against internationalism. Nevertheless, in an era of the globalisation of culture, the questions of where cultural heritage belongs and how we

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[1] For an overview on the evolution of Italian Cultural Heritage legislation, see Balzani 2003; see also Mariotti 1892; Emiliani 1973; Mattalianno 1975; Rossari, Togni 1978; Gioli 2003; Fusar Poli 2006; Ragusa 2011; ead. 2012; on the institutional apparatus and procedures to serve its preservation and valorsation, Bencivenni, Dalla Negra, Grifoni 1987; specifically, on archaeology, Manfredini 2018; for an overview of the pre-unitarian legislations, Parpagliolo 1913; Emiliani 1978; concerning the history of Italian archaeology, Manacorda 1982; Guzzo 1993; Settis 1993; Barbanera 1998; id. 2001; id. 2013; id. 2015.

should recognize, access, and even understand and valorise our heritage surface with ever-increasing urgency.

This is particularly evident in the current times of repatriations of Italy's looted archaeological property to its original national context from foreign "universal museums"[2]. Repatriations that make globalised cultural heritage become national once again foster new tensions between cultural property nationalism and internationalism[3]. This "re-nationalization" of heritage may be thought to nuance valorisation, our very knowledge and understanding, of archaeological relics. The "localism" that globalisation has produced, in turn, might boost the friction between the state's functions of protection and valorisation. Securing archaeological heritage thus means acknowledging the tensions in cultural heritage law that support bridging the divide between national ownership and universal culture.

Setting off from the debate over the protection of archaeological heritage in post-Unification Italy and presenting the case of the repatriation of *Hellenistic Silver* to Italy, this paper discusses the dilemmas posed by today's repatriations of archaeological property to its original national context and asks what strategies we might bring forward to negotiate these dilemmas.

### The Debate over the Protection of Archaeological Heritage in Post-Unity Italy

The second decade after the Unification of Italy, archaeologists, historians, and politicians started debating the protection of the Nation's archaeological heritage[4]. In this crucial moment in the process of organizing the functions of the new state, including public education and museum institutions, several dilemmas surfaced. One of the most significant dilemmas refers to the tensions between state retention and free international circulation of cultural heritage, or cultural property nationalism and internationalism, in the words of John H. Merryman[5]. A second dilemma includes the function and scope of museums, function and scope which, in turn, might dictate the distribution of museums on the national territory (many local museums versus a few central museums). Two opposing views regarding these dilemmas surfaced. These views can be best illustrated through the thoughts of the archaeologists who supported them, Giuseppe Fiorelli[6] and Giancarlo Conestabile della Staffa[7].

Both Fiorelli and Conestabile believed that what Fiorelli termed the "real value" of archaeological objects is defined not only by the beauty and aesthetic value of the objects in question but also by the "circumstances" of their retrieval[8] and their "respective arrangement"[9]; in a word, by considering them "historical documents"[10].

Nonetheless, Conestabile maintained that, if archaeological objects found in Italy were moved either within or beyond the boundaries of the state, the accurate documentation of the archaeological record and "the possibility of intellectual reconstruction of the complex of the single findings" would nevertheless make possible to reunite these findings[11].

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[2]  Declaration on the importance and value of Universal Museums (2002). See MacGregor 2004; Cuno 2011; id. 2012 and Curtis 2005; id. 2006; Flynn 2012. For a critique of the concept of "universal museum", O'Neill 2004.

[3]  See Christillin, Greco 2021, p. 62.

[4]  See note 1 above. For an overview of the debate over the protection of Italy's archaeological property, which was tied to that on classical education, see also Catoni 1993.

[5]  Merryman 1985; id. 1986; id. 2005. See also Fabrizio Lemme in this volume.

[6]  Genovese 1992; De Angelis 1993; Kannes 1997; *Giuseppe Fiorelli* 1999; Osanna 2015; see also Barbanera 2015, pp. 60-73 *et passim*.

[7]  Volpi 1982.

[8]  Fiorelli 1885, p. 567. The translations are by the Author, unless otherwise specified.

[9]  Conestabile 1874, p. 347.

[10]  Fiorelli 1885, p. 567.

[11]  *Ibid.*

Fiorelli, instead, asserted that only state retention of Italian archaeological property would assure the conservation of its "real value", to direct advantage of both the artworks and the national context and "universal culture"[12]. He wrote: «In the name of what scientific principle could the foreigners contend with us for the ownership of ancient objects, objects that conveniently displayed in our collections, owing to the value of real historical documents they acquire, remain the constant means from which science benefits in the most effective way? These [objects] instead, out of their context, without the aid of the relationships that contribute to determining their full value, lose most of their significance»[13]. Also, Fiorelli maintained that the exclusive nature of Italy' property would be essential to protect the state's archaeological heritage: «every time we gave part of this richness of ours to whatever foreign museum – he claimed –, the uniqueness of [our] Monuments would be destroyed and the advantage that the property […] brings us would diminish, and so, too, would do the significance of our collections»[14].

Nonetheless, at this early stage, no one, not even Fiorelli, considered that the exportation of any Italian archaeological objects should be forbidden. He only wished the State would retain "only what scientific reason and good method require"[15]. The historian Ruggiero Bonghi supported this point, adding that insignificant objects could be let go to "rouse in the foreigners' minds another image which could put them in connection with us and […] show them how much of us there is in their past and present life"[16].

Furthermore, Fiorelli maintained that archaeological objects should be preserved and displayed in close proximity to their original context and that exhibits should "demonstrate the exactness with which the survey had been conducted, providing through the arrangement of the exhibits the material necessary for study"[17]. For precisely this reason, Fiorelli envisioned a burgeoning web of state museums at the regional and sub-regional level. Moreover, he encouraged municipalities and provinces to establish their own museums. He thereby enticed the proliferation of local museums, a proliferation that has now become increasingly popular since the late nineteenth century.

By contrast, Conestabile conceived the functions of museums as analogous to experimental laboratories of the natural sciences, chiefly aimed at education and research[18]. As one of the most immediate consequences of this notion of the museum, Conestabile favoured a lesser degree of museum decentralization, with "complete" didactic museums of one civilization (like the Etruscan) established in key cities in the regions where those civilizations had once flourished (such as Florence)[19]. He believed that

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[12] FIORELLI 1885, p. 565.

[13] FIORELLI 1885, p. 574. See also Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura XVI, Sessione 1889, *Discussioni*, Seconda Tornata del 7 giugno 1889, p. 2277.

[14] Archivio Centrale dello Stato (henceforth ACS), *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti, Archivio generale (1860-1890), I vers., b. 40, fasc. 67, s.fasc. 29, letter from Giuseppe Fiorelli to the Minister of Public Education, 4 January 1875. This is the reason why Fiorelli also bemoaned the exchange of "Italian" duplicate specimens and plaster casts and other reproductions (FIORELLI 1883, 13-14; see also, FIORELLI 1885, 558-565 *et passim*) – which Conestabile instead supported (see note 19 below).

[15] FIORELLI 1885, p. 574; see also *ivi*., pp. 566 and 580. Cf. Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura XVI, Sessione 1887-1888, *Discussioni*, Tornata del 24 novembre 1887, no. 7, p. 79; Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura XVI, Sessione 1887-1888, *Discussioni*, Seconda Tornata del 7 giugno 1889, p. 2281.

[16] BONGHI 1874, p. 324.

[17] FIORELLI 1885, pp. 569-574. See also FIORELLI 1883, pp. 14-19. See also, FIORELLI 1883, p. 12 *et passim* and FIORELLI 1885, pp. 569-570, 578 *et passim*.

[18] CONESTABILE 1874, pp. 370 and 373.

[19] Conestabile wanted Florence to have a museum of plaster casts and facsimiles after objects which were to be discovered in Tuscany; for the Museum of Antiquities and Egyptian of Turin to gather reproductions of Sardinian and Phoenician antiquities after originals in Cagliari; for Bologna to host a museum of reproductions of objects discovered in Tirol, Switzerland, Styria, Austria, Germany and France; and for Rome to gather, along with its originals, collections of reproductions of Greek, Roman, Egyptian antiquities displayed in other Italian museums, while other "central museums" would be established in Padua, Naples and Palermo (CONESTABILE 1874, pp. 370-372, 375). On the *topos* of the "complete" museums, see also DE RUGGIERO 1874, pp. 80-81; see also notes 23 and 25 below.

having been "completed" through duplicates, reproductions[20], and imports[21], museums would be able to convey interconnected "historical or scientific"[22] discourses for the sake of education and training.

The proliferation of local museums in late nineteenth-century Italy was highly criticized by archaeologists and politicians[23]. The archaeologist Antonino Salinas, for instance, bemoaned many Sicilian masterpieces being scattered among museums in the mountains of Sicily, plagued by bandits, far from scientific and cultural centres[24], and demanding to be seen mostly by Sicilians. He wished reproductions of Sicilian masterpieces kept in these museums and abroad[25] would enrich the Palermo Museum and make it the epitome of Sicily's "history of arts and crafts"[26].

On the contrary, though, a capillary distribution of archaeological museums across the Italian territory was thought to promote access to and education through heritage[27]. The case of Ernesto Schiaparelli and the Egyptian Museums of Italy is an exemplary one. The director of the Museum of Antiquities and Egyptian of Turin wished to exchange duplicate objects in the Museum's collections with duplicate objects in other Egyptian collections in Italy to establish the most prominent Egyptian Museum of Europe in Turin. Nonetheless, he eventually argued that this exchange strategy "would also be an irrational thing; because, while it would not give the scholars all that advantage one could imagine *a priori*, it would surely threaten the formation of that general culture that plays such a huge role in the intellectual progress of the nations"[28].

After fifty years of academic debates and abortive legislative attempts, the legislator has eventually followed Fiorelli's input and given the state a property right over any cultural property found after the date of the law (no. 364 of 20 June 1909) and a pre-emption right over any valuable property to be offered for sale[29]. Archaeological museums have been multiplying all over the Italian territory ever since.

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[20] CONESTABILE 1874, pp. 366-369. See also, BONGHI 1874, p. 322 and DE RUGGIERO 1874, pp. 76-77 and 81; SALINAS 1866, *passim*; ID. 1874, *passim*.

[21] CONESTABILE 1874, 368-369; cf. also BONGHI 1874, p. 330.

[22] CONESTABILE 1874, pp. 367 ff.

[23] Atti Parlamentari, Senato del Regno, Legislatura XVI, Sessione 1887-1888, *Documenti. Progetti di Legge e Relazioni, Relazione dell'Ufficio Centrale composto dei senatori Prinetti, Puccioni, Guerrieri-Gonzaga, Barraco G. e Vitelleschi, relatore, sul Progetto di Legge "Conservazione dei Monumenti e degli oggetti d'arte e di antichità"*, no. 13-A, pp. 5-6.

[24] SALINAS 1874, pp. 18-19.

[25] He wondered, for instance, whether the Palermo Museum could not get reproductions of the *Venus of Syracuse* and Agrigento's *Giant* of the Temple of Olympian Zeus, the casts of which he could see everyday side-by-side in Berlin's archaeological museum (SALINAS 1874, p. 18).

[26] SALINAS 1874, pp. 17-19 and 29. By contrast, as far as art history is concerned, the suppression of the religious corporations in post-Unity Italy boosted the bourgeoning of local Museums that recovered and showcased artworks thereof close their original context. On this, see GIOLI 1997.

[27] The redistribution of archaeological objects, namely duplicate specimens, over a centre-periphery model, was not news: as early as 1870, Marco Guastalla, who had been instructed by the Minister to survey Tuscany's Museums (the State museums of Florence and the local museums of Arezzo, Cortona, and Volterra), wished that both State and local museums would create nets of exchanges of duplicate specimens, thereby boosting public access to and education through such archaeological objects (ACS, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Accademie e Istituti di Belle Arti, b. 6).

[28] ACS, *Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione*, Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti, Archivio generale (1860-1890), III vers., parte 2, b. 285, fasc. 162, s.fasc. 3, letter from Ernesto Schiaparelli to the Ministry of Public Education, 17 May 1901. Schiaparelli hence tried to negotiate the tension between centralization and decentralization by proposing the other major Egyptian Museums in Italy – namely the Museums of Florence, Naples, and Palermo – to exchange duplicate specimens from their collections for duplicates in the Turin Museum. Nonetheless, his proposal eventually failed. See also CONESTABILE (1874, pp. 366-369) whishing that a selection of, for instance, the countless duplicate bronzes found in Pompeii would be sent out to State Museums owning none, for other Italians to have "a real idea" of the shared culture to which they once belonged.

[29] See note 1 above.

The Repatriation of Archaeological Property to Italy:
The Case of the *Hellenistic Silver*

Circumventions of the law primarily due to political collusion or direct violation of State sovereignty that caused the exportation of Italy's cultural property over the past century undermined the objects' "real value" needed to embody the national identity that is of global interest[30].

Repatriating archaeological relics to their original national context, in turn, means restoring some of their "real value" to those relics while protecting and enhancing their importance for education and growth at the global and national levels. Nonetheless, repatriations also revive some of the most significant dilemmas raised by archaeological heritage since its first formation. Another dilemma (which neither Fiorelli nor Conestabile addressed in the late 1800s) refers to the type of functions that public powers should deliver in this field: protection, management, and valorisation.

In order to discuss such dilemmas and question how we might negotiate them today, the recent repatriation of Morgantina's *Hellenistic Silver* by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, to Sicily represents a good case in point.

The *Hellenistic Silver* (*fig. 1*) is a group of Hellenistic gilt silver objects from Sicily that was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of New York in three tranches in 1981, 1982, and 1984, for US$ 3 million. It consists of two sets of objects for the symposium. The libation-dish (*phiale mesomphalos*), miniature altar (*bomiskos*), and two covered boxes for incense (*pyxides*) had a religious function (*fig. 1,* background). Instead, the five cups (including three medallion bowls, one cup with perspective meander once containing the *emblema* of Skylla, and a *skyphos*), pilcher (*oinochoe*), ladle (*kiathos*), and two deep bowls resting on three feet in the shape of comic theatrical masks were used in the ritual of the symposium (*fig. 1,* foreground).

In the 1990s, the Carabinieri's Command for the Protection of Cultural Heritage had been told that the *Silver* had been clandestinely excavated in the early 1980s from the ancient Greek settlement of Morgantina, whose ruins lie not far from Aidone in central Sicily. A US team led by Professor Malcolm Bell III, University of Virginia, was able to recover the original archaeological context of the hoard. The treasure had been hidden beneath the floors of a country house divided into two groups. At the bottom of one of the holes, a bronze Mamertine coin mint in 214-212 BC was discovered. The Romans captured Morgantina in the Second Punic War in 211 BC; the treasure was likely hidden



Fig. 1 – *Hellenistic Silver*, third century BC, Aidone, Regional Archaeological Museum. Photo by Author, courtesy of the Regional Archaeological Museum of Aidone.

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[30] See Bernard 2022.

for safekeeping in wartime by someone who did not return for it, maybe one Eumolpos whose name is incised or punched on several pieces. The treasure had probably originated in the elite circles of the metropolis of Syracuse[31].

How and when the treasure came to Eumolpos and Morgantina from Syracuse is still unknown. Nonetheless, the discovery of the *Hellenistic Silver*'s archaeological context proves the importance of documented scientific excavation for preserving, understanding, and valorising both the relics and the context itself, as Fiorelli had claimed.

The *Silver* was repatriated under the 2006 Accord signed by the Metropolitan Museum of Art of New York and the Ministry for Cultural Assets and Activities of the Italian Republic and the Commission for Cultural Assets of the Region of Sicily[32]. After remaining at the Met on loan for a few years, exhibited with the legend "Lent by the Republic of Italy – Region of Sicily", it was eventually returned to Italy in 2010 (Accord, art. 5, co. 2). In exchange for the *Silver*, "to make possible the continued presence in the galleries of the Museum of cultural assets of equal beauty and historical and artistic significance to that of the Hellenistic Silver", Italy declared it would make, "on an agreed, continuing and rotating sequential basis: a) the four-year loan of archaeological assets of equal beauty and artistic and historical significance, in the same context where possible, to that of the Hellenistic Silver; b) the four-year loan of the Hellenistic Silver" (art. 5, co. 3).

Furthermore, the Accord included that the Met would conduct excavations in Italy. The discovered artifacts would be allowed to leave Italy for the time necessary for their study and restoration and loaned to the Museum for temporary exhibition for four years (art. 7).

The Accord compensated both the artifacts and the national and local contexts that the looting and illicit displacement had damaged. At the same time, it contributed to promoting understanding of those artifacts' "real value" and the importance of their conservation in close proximity to their "original context". It also warned museums and collectors against illicit trafficking, which deprives us of lost contexts and compromises the artworks' documentary value. Furthermore, the Accord underpinned the recognition of the museum's role as a "reception context" for the preservation, study, and exhibition of humanity's artistic and cultural patrimony. It has boosted a spirit of cooperation between "universal museums" that secure and valorise cultural heritage and source nations. Moreover, it has triggered transparent museum acquisition and loan policies and due diligence practices[33].

The *Silver* was returned to Italy and temporarily displayed at the Museo Nazionale Romano – Palazzo Massimo alle Terme in Rome and then at the Museo Archeologico Regionale "Antonino Salinas" in Palermo in 2010[34] before ending up in the small archaeological museum of Aidone[35]. A huge debate arose straightaway over how and where the *Silver* did, did not, or would have better fulfilled the purposes of fruition and valorisation: in the little town of Aidone or a city with a more significant touristic flow?[36] Aidone cannot compete with the big capital cities of the contemporary Grand Tour as far as the number of visitors is concerned, but the Italian State should consider whether

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[31]  BELL 2000; GUZZO 2002; ID. 2003; BELL 2013.

[32]  SCOVAZZI 2017.

[33]  See BRIGGS 2007, p. 643 *et passim*.

[34]  For the temporary exhibition "Il Tesoro di Morgantina. Argenti del III sec. a.C. da New York alla Sicilia, passando per Roma" [The Treasure of Morgantina. Silvers of the 3rd c. BCE from New York to Sicily, passing through Rome].

[35]  The museum also showcases other repatriated artworks: the Greek sixth-century BC *Acroliths of Demeter and Persephone* returned by the Bayly Art Museum of the University of Virginia in 2008 (POVOLEDO 2007a; see also MARCONI 2008; MANISCALCO 2015; GRECO 2018), the Greek late fifth-century BC Cult Statue of a Goddess once known as the Getty Aphrodite, repatriated by the Los Angeles museum in December 2010 (POVOLEDO 2007b; FELCH 2011; FELCH, FRAMMOLINO 2011; DONADIO 2014; see also *Cult Statue of a Goddess* 2007; MARCONI 2011; ID. 2013; ID. 2016), and a terracotta head depicting the Greek god Hades that the Getty itself returned in 2016 (RAFFIOTTA 2014; EAD. 2015; EAD. 2016). In general, on the recovering of Morgantina's *disiecta membra*, see RAFFIOTTA 2013; RAFFIOTTA 2020.

[36]  See notes 24-25 above. Similar dilemmas have recently arisen around many other masterpieces, including, for instance, the *Dancing Satyr* of Mazara del Vallo and the *Euphronios Krater*; returned to Italy in 2007, once displayed at the Quirinale Palace and then at the Etruscan Art Museum of Villa Giulia in Rome, the *Krater* is currently on view in Cerveteri's small museum (BERNARD 2022).

this reason is sufficient to remove it from its "original context". As Fiorelli had foreseen, this removal would make the *Silver* again but a beautiful thing, not a historical document with a universal or even national value[37].

The display of the returned and relocated archaeological property and the museum narrative are crucial for protecting and valorising this property. As Fiorelli claimed in the late 1800s, not only should archaeological objects be preserved and displayed in close proximity to their original context, but also the exhibits should "prove the exactness with which the survey had been conducted". For most looted archaeological properties, this exhibition strategy is impossible because their original context is irremediably lost. However, the case of the *Hellenistic Silver*, whose archaeological context has been recovered through archaeological excavation, is a peculiar one. The current display of the *Silver* at Aidone's Museum mirrors the objects' ritual function in the ancient world while, at the same time, recounting the history of their burial at the time of the Roman conquest of Morgantina. The excavation and documentation of the findspot and the return of the objects to the original national (local) context make the "beautiful things" "historical documents". At the same time, the museum, being both a "legacy" of the excavation and an extension of the field, becomes itself a context (see Latin *contextere*) and fosters the artifact and the archaeological context's (and its own) universal value.

The exhibition design should nevertheless account not only for the artifacts' life in the ancient world, recorded in the archaeological context (as foreseen by Fiorelli). It should also make visible other facets of the artifact's "afterlife" – that is, the events surrounding the artifact after its discovery, including its reuse, collecting, restoration, looting, and later return, at successive stages in its history. Any moment in the artifact's afterlife crystalizes in a new "reception context"[38] (that Fiorelli did not foresee): this "reception context" engages with and mirrors the knowledge, politics and poetics, values, and aesthetics of contemporary society and offers narratives that can be revealing about the understanding and construction of heritage over time. In this way, perhaps, the looted and repatriated objects might also warn the public against the threat of archaeological context destruction. The current installation of the *Silver* in Aidone illustrates this paradigm.

Being the latest "reception context" and the vital matrix within which objects are given meaning and legitimization today, the museum might also make its own meta-history part of the exhibition design. The Egyptian Museum of Turin is a case in point[39]. The current display of the finds from documented excavations to "reproduce" the original context (also envisaged by Fiorelli) returns to the objects some of their "real value", despite the distance from that original context. For example, the historical and the current installation of the Tomb of Kha and Merit mirror the lost archaeological context[40], but they also tell us the story of the excavation of the tomb and the exportation and study of the relics. Furthermore, the Museum's gallery dedicated to the meta-history of the Museum literally exposes how the Museum's collections have become part of Italy's historical culture as evidence of the history of archaeology and the history of collecting, connoisseurship, and curatorship[41].

One might wonder whether this observation may or may not also apply to American institutions and the "Italian" objects therein. Would or would not transparent exhibition and narrative strategies accounting for the artworks' life and their afterlife, wherever they are, return to those relics some of their "real value" in any event, "to direct advantage of universal culture"? This question is particularly

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[37] See Christillin, Greco 2021, p. 23.

[38] The concept of the "reception context" is conceived after Hans R. Jauss and the Constance School's theoretical reflection over the *Rezeptionsästhetik* (aesthetics of reception). See Jauss 1982.

[39] *Museo Egizio* 2015, *passim*; Moiso 2016; *Missione Egitto* 2017. A system of "partage" was negotiated by the Head of Egypt's French-run Antiquities Services Gaston Maspero in 1882 according to which foreign missions had the permission to ship abroad a share of the finds they had made during their excavations after the Egyptian Museum's first refusal; this is why many Egyptian objects and the related excavation documentation are today scattered throughout many museums across Europe and the globe (see, among others, Stevenson 2014; ead. 2015a; ead. 2015b, pp. 4-5).

[40] See *Missione Egitto* 2017, pp. 323-324, figs. 5-6; Ferraris 2015.

[41] https://youtu.be/GF91kYKEiVE.

significant in the case of the *Hellenistic Silver* due to its four years rotating loan to the Met[42]. This loan policy may negotiate the tensions between cultural-property nationalism and internationalism, raising further tensions between preservation and fruition.

On the one hand, archaeological relics allowed to travel can be reflective of national culture at the global level. International loan exchange policies between the museums, in turn, might enhance Aidone's cultural vitality and brand image, thus making the Aidone Museum and the local cultural heritage a resource of sustainable socio-economic development. On the other hand, this loan policy involves costs and risks compromising the preservation that is needed for those archaeological relics to embody the national identity that is of global interest. Out of their archaeological context, the archaeological objects would be nothing but "speechless monument[s]" – as Minister of Public Education Giuseppe Coppino claimed as early as the late 1800s[43]. At its worst, the *Silver*'s unlimited travel forbids it from taking root in Aidone, its original soil. Being continually transplanted and delocalized, the *Silver* does not identify with and thus disseminate Morgantina's *genius loci*. In other words, continuous delocalization risks diluting the local and national archaeological narratives of global interest and universal value[44].

## CONCLUDING REMARKS AND OPENING QUESTIONS

Several dilemmas have shaped the protection of Italy's archaeological heritage from national unification. After Law 364/1909 established state property of archaeological finds (which Fiorelli had foreseen since the 1880s), cultural property nationalism seemed to prevail over internationalism. In the history of the Italian state, the law has sometimes proved ineffective. Today, the repatriation of looted cultural property to Italy revives the conflict between cultural property nationalism and internationalism: the return of objects to their national context seems to favour once again the interest of cultural property nationalism. However, as Fiorelli had predicted, the very return of the artifacts to their "original context" returns to those artifacts their "real value" and thus promotes "universal culture". At the same time, the subsuming of "local(ist)" fundamentalism fostered by globalisation boosts the tensions between preservation and fruition of archaeological heritage.

Protecting repatriated heritage vis-à-vis all these tensions may thus mean fostering alongside the law a continuous reinterpretation and display of the objects: museums should return to those objects some of their "real value" by unlocking multiple, transparent narratives that relate to both their life and afterlife. Thereby, the museum might become a "reception context" and evoke multiple contexts across time and space that might be significant for a global audience. Furthermore, "glocal" and sustainable international loan policies might trigger a spirit of cooperation between nations and enhance the objects' universal or even national and local value.

In conclusion to this article, some reflections emerge. Without pretending to provide firm answers to such reflections, acknowledging them might guide further discussion on the subject.

First, the Italian State should consider how the repatriation of looted archaeological property impinges on the original national and local context in practical terms. Repatriations are generally

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[42] EAKIN 2013. The Sicilian authorities are claiming for a revision of the Accord for the *Silver* to be permanently held in Aidone (*Argenti di Morgantina* 2020).

[43] Atti Parlamentari, Camera dei Deputati, Legislatura XVI, Sessione 1887-1888, *Discussioni*, Tornata del 23 novembre 1887, no. 6, p. 54. See also SETTIS 2014.

[44] This is the reason why the Region of Sicily has inscribed the Silver in the list of immovable cultural properties that, being the core of their museum's collection, cannot be loaned, ex Assessorial Decree no. 1771 of 27 June 2013. The Decree was not respected, though, and in 2014 the *Silver* went back to New York. The *querelle* has been, and is still, featured heavily on the press; see e.g., CIANTIA 2013; PALERMO 2019.

celebrated through extraordinary exhibitions to denounce and discourage looting and illicit trade[45]. Nonetheless, there is general amnesia regarding the ordinary reception of the repatriated object in terms of display and narrative strategies[46] and regarding the benefits of the repatriation in terms of source generation and other factors of territorial revitalization and economic development. Moreover, spill-over benefits might reverberate on external and internal political and social dimensions, such as community-building, city branding, and education[47].

Second, we should ask what other strategies we might bring forward to negotiate the dilemmas raised by the repatriation of archaeological property. A first strategy might include facsimiles, as Conestabile foresaw in the late 1800s. Indeed, since the establishment of the post-imperial museums, plaster casts and other reproductions in European and American museums have served the scope to foster educational and artistic training, promote access to objects, and enhance museum narratives[48]. Replicas have also been used to reunite the *disiecta membra*, reconstruct lost originals[49], and foster repatriations *ante litteram*[50]. Still today, museum copies replace the originals repatriated to the source nation/community[51] or are even returned in substitution for the originals, like Veronese's *Dinner at Cana* of Venice[52]. On the other hand, for example, the Greek State is not content with the copies of the Elgin marbles displayed instead of the originals in the Acropolis Museum in Athens. Empty spaces and plaster casts in the topo-mimetic installation exhibit a physical absence and stage a claim against the British Museum who owns the originals[53].

Conversely, replicas that replace originals in international temporary exhibitions or events, for example, Michelangelo's *David* at Expo 2020 Dubai's Italian Pavillon[54], or even in permanent museums of reproductions like the Otsūka Museum of Art in Tokushima, Japan[55], are thought to promote worldwide knowledge of a nation's cultural heritage. They might also attract visitors from abroad, thereby boosting local growth at multiple levels.

A second strategy might coincide with creating digital "impossible museums" that reunite the *disiecta membra* virtually, like, for instance, the Digital Museum of Copper and Bronzes in Tongling, China[56], or the Digital Benin project[57]. Such museums might also contribute to "reconstruct the complex of the single findings" and thus return to the displaced objects some of their lost "real value", as Conestabile has foreseen. Furthermore, objects and museums broadcasted across geographical boundaries and beyond their original settings have the potential to reach and engage ever-wider audiences. They might also promote international access to, sharing, and valorisation of archaeological objects. Nonetheless, we should question the role of digital museums in translating the knowledge of (one national?) heritage to a global audience. Museums, in turn, should consider how they can concretely show the multiplicity, diversity, multidimensional and multilingual nature of heritage and what virtual display and narrative strategies could promote understanding and appreciation of it[58].

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[45] See for instance the triumphal and widely acclaimed exhibition titled "*Nostoi*: Capolavori Ritrovati" (Rome, Quirinale Palace 2008) showcasing sixty-nine recovered antiquities from the Getty Museum in Los Angeles, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Princeton University Art Museum (Nostoi 2007), and, more recently, the exhibition "L'arte di salvare l'arte. Frammenti di storia d'Italia" (Rome, Quirinale Palace 2019), also on tour in Paris, New York and Beijing. See *Arte di salvare l'arte* 2019; *Saving Art Preserving Heritage* 2019.

[46] See Vinnie Nørskov in this volume.

[47] See e.g., Brown 2019; *Culture and Local Development* 2019.

[48] Conestabile 1874, pp. 366-369; De Ruggiero 1874; Salinas 1874; de Zerbi 1885.

[49] See, e.g., Hartswick 1983.

[50] Salinas 1874, p. 19. See also note 22 above.

[51] See e.g., the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History "Killer Whale Hat Project" (Hollinger *et alii* 2013).

[52] Latour, Lowe 2011.

[53] On this, see, among others, Lending 2009.

[54] https://italyexpo2020.it/en/memory-and-future-michelangelos-david-at-expo-2020-dubai/.

[55] https://o-museum.or.jp/en/.

[56] https://en.unesco.org/courier/2020-4/china-bronzes-around-world-reunite-digital-museum.

[57] https://digital-benin.org/.

[58] See Christillin, Greco 2021, p. 113.

Fig. 2 – Liz Glynn, *Surrogate Objects for the Metropolitan – Hellenistic Silver Collection* (2011) on view at *Anche le statue muoiono* [Statues also Die] (Turin 2018). Photo by Author, courtesy of the Egyptian Museum of Turin.

Lastly, a third strategy might come from the use of artworks by contemporary artists within the archaeological museum to construct critical discourses about ownership, provenance, preservation, trade, and destruction of heritage[59]. The case of Liz Glynn's *Surrogate Objects for the Metropolitan – Hellenistic Silver Collection*, on view at the exhibition "Statues Also Die" in Turin (2018), is a paradigmatic one (*fig. 2*). The work belongs to a series recreating from waste, wax, and organic material some of the disputed antiquities returned by the Met to Italy between 2006 and 2010. The work might be taken as denouncing the loss (the loss of the archaeological context and, therefore, the loss of the archaeological artworks' "real value") and the (illicit) dislocation of heritage. Glynn's bogus *Silver* raises a mirror against the Medusa-glance of the disputed, authentic original that it replicates. While eternizing the original's memory and multilingual and multifaceted identity in its own identity[60], Glynn's authentic copy evokes at one and the same time a host of actors and sites: the authentic original and its original context, the artist, the visitors, the museums, the state. Exhibiting Glynn's work in New York and Aidone might stage a powerful warn against the threats of looting and illicit trafficking while, at the same time, contributing to negotiating the dilemmas raised by cultural heritage and its protection.

All these strategies might bridge the divide between the national identity that archaeological objects are thought to epitomise and universal culture, as Fiorelli and Conestabile have foreseen as early as the end of the nineteenth century.

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[59]   See, for example, and among others, "Anche le statue muoiono" [Statues also Die], Turin 2018 (*Anche le statue muoiono* 2018); "Phantom Limb", Dubai 2019-2020 (https://jameelartscentre.org/whats-on/phantom-limb/); Damien Hirscht's "Archaeology Now", Rome 2021 (*Archaeology Now* 2021) and Francesco Vezzoli's "Palcoscenici archeologici" [Archaeological Stages], Brescia 2021(*https://www.bresciamusei.com/detnews.asp?n=8&num=2172&t=PALCOSCE-NICI+ARCHEOLOGICI%2E+Interventi+curatoriali+di+Francesco+Vezzoli+%7C+Parco+Archeologico+e+Museo-+di+Santa+Giulia*).

[60]   See Latour, Lowe 2011.

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6. Paolo Bonini, *La casa nella Grecia romana. Forme e funzioni dello spazio privato fra I e VI secolo*, 2006

7. Federica Rinaldi, *Mosaici e pavimenti del Veneto. Province di Padova, Rovigo, Verona e Vicenza (I sec. a.C. - VI sec. d.C.)*, 2007

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9. Maddalena Bassani, Sacraria. *Ambienti e piccoli edifici per il culto domestico in area vesuviana*, 2008

10. Veronica Provenzale, *Echi di propaganda imperiale in scene di coppia a Pompei. Enea e Didone, Marte e Venere, Perseo e Andromeda*, 2008

11. Elisa Lanza, *La ceramica "di Gnathia" al Museo Nazionale Jatta di Ruvo di Puglia. Ipotesi di ricontestualizzazione*, 2008

12. Marianna Bressan, *Il teatro in Attica e Peloponneso tra età greca ed età romana. Morfologie, politiche edilizie e contesti culturali*, 2009

13. Francesca Ghedini, *Il carro dei Musei Capitolini. Epos e mito nella società tardo antica*, 2009

14. *Intra illa moenia domus ac penates (Liv. 2, 40, 7). Il tessuto abitativo nelle città romane della Cisalpina*, Atti delle Giornate di Studio (Padova, 10-11 aprile 2008), a cura di Matteo Annibaletto, Francesca Ghedini, 2009

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17. Isabella Colpo, *Ruinae… et putres robore trunci. Paesaggi di rovine e rovine nel paesaggio nella pittura romana (I secolo a.C.-I secolo d.C.)*, 2010

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19. *Religionem significare (Cic., Verr., II, IV, 1, 2-4). Aspetti storico-religiosi, giuridici e materiali dei sacra privata nel mondo romano*, Atti dell'incontro di studio internazionale (Padova, 8-9 giugno 2009), a cura di M. Bassani, F. Ghedini, 2011

20. *Tra protostoria e storia. Studi in onore di Loredana Capuis*, Roma, 2011

21. Aquae Patavinae. *Il termalismo antico nel comprensorio euganeo e in Italia*, Atti del I Convegno Nazionale (Padova, 21-22 giugno 2010), a cura di Maddalena Bassani, Marianna Bressan, Francesca Ghedini, 2011

22. Michele Bueno, *Cultura musiva nella VII regio. Mosaici e pavimenti dell'Etruria centro-settentrionale*, 2011

23. *Atria longa patescunt: le forme dell'abitare nella Cisalpina romana*, a cura di Francesca Ghedini, Matteo Annibaletto, 2012

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25. Giovanna Falezza, *Il paesaggio sacro della Macedonia romana*, 2012

26. Aquae Patavinae. *Montegrotto Terme e il termalismo in Italia. Aggiornamenti e nuove prospettive di valorizzazione*, Atti del II Convegno nazionale (Padova, 14-15 giugno 2011), a cura di M. Bassani, M. Bressan, F. Ghedini, 2012

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30. Cecilia Rossi, *Le necropoli urbane di Padova romana*, 2014

31. *Cura, preghiera e benessere. Le stazioni curative termominerali nell'Italia romana*, a cura di M. Annibaletto, M. Bassani, F. Ghedini, 2014

32. Caterina Previato, *Aquileia. Materiali, forme e sistemi costruttivi dall'età repubblicana alla tarda età imperiale*, 2015

33. Giulia Salvo, *Miti scolpiti, miti narrati. Riflessioni sulla produzione di sarcofagi romani tra arte e letteratura*, 2015

34. *TECT 1. Un progetto per la conoscenza della pittura parietale romana nell'Italia settentrionale*, a cura di M. Salvadori, D. Scagliarini, con A. Coralini, A. Didonè, R. Helg, A. Malgieri, G. Salvo, 2015

35. *TECT 2. La pittura frammentaria di età romana: metodi di catalogazione e studio dei reperti*, Atti della giornata di studio (Padova, 20 marzo 2014), a cura di M. Salvadori, A. Didonè, G. Salvo, 2015

36. Monica Salvadori, Horti picti. *Forma e significato del giardino dipinto nella pittura*, 2017

37. *I pavimenti romani di Aquileia. Contesti, tecniche, repertorio decorativo*, a cura di F. Ghedini, M. Bueno, M. Novello, F. Rinaldi, 2017

38 Giulia Simeoni, *«Forme mutate in nuovi corpi». Le metamorfosi di Ovidio illustrate nel Codice Panciatichi 63*, 2017

39 *Beyond limits. Studi in onore di Giovanni Leonardi*, a cura di M. Cupitò, M. Vidale, A. Angelini, 2017

40. Maddalena Bassani, Sacra privata *nell'Italia centrale. Archeologia, fonti letterarie e documenti epigrafici*, 2017

41. Denis Francisci, Locus sepulturae. *Il valore topografico delle evidenze funerarie in età romana. Teoria, metodi e casi di studio dal Trentino-Alto Adige/Südtirol*, 2017

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48. Paolo Michelini, *L'organizzazione della produzione artigianale a Padova tra il IX e il I secolo a.C.*, 2020

49. Alessandra Didonè, *Pittura romana nella* Regio X, 2020

50. *L'area archeologica di via Neroniana a Montegrotto Terme. 1. Dallo scavo alla valorizzazione*, a cura di M. Bressan, F. Ghedini, P. Zanovello. *2. I materiali*, a cura di S. Mazzocchin, c.s.

51. Lanifica. *Il ruolo della donna nella produzione tessile attraverso le evidenze funerarie*, a cura di M.S. Busana, C. Rossi, D. Francisci, 2021

For centuries, art forgery has threatened our cultural heritage's intangible values and undermined fundamental concepts like public trust, ownership, knowledge, and identity. Moreover, honest copies and digital technologies like virtual or augmented reality nuance the uniqueness on which the protection of cultural objects is based. *Beyond Forgery. Collecting, Authentication and Protection of Cultural Heritage* explores the blurry notions of original, fake, and copy, the stimuli to forgery and its implications, and the authentication techniques from a historical perspective and within a broader discourse about securing cultural heritage. The book includes some reflections on forgery and art collecting and the role of museums in representing authenticity. The relationship between forgery and illicit trade in cultural goods is also addressed. Gathering contributions by scholars in the fields of archaeology, art history, history, anthropology, philosophy, museum studies, legal studies, psychology, and natural science, this book offers a wide perspective on some of the most significant threats and challenges our cultural heritage has posed and poses to us. Acknowledging such threats and challenges is crucial for understanding, protecting, and valorizing our cultural heritage.

Il falso d'arte ha minacciato i valori intangibili del nostro patrimonio culturale per secoli e minato concetti fondamentali come fiducia pubblica, proprietà, conoscenza e identità. Inoltre, copie e tecnologie digitali come la realtà virtuale e aumentata mitigano il concetto di unicità su cui si basa la tutela degli oggetti culturali. *Beyond Forgery. Collecting, Authentication and Protection of Cultural Heritage* indaga le nebulose nozioni di originale, falso e copia, le cause della falsificazione e le sue implicazioni, e i metodi di autenticazione degli oggetti in prospettiva storica e all'interno di un più ampio discorso sulla protezione del patrimonio culturale. Il libro include alcune riflessioni sulla falsificazione e il collezionismo d'arte e sul ruolo dei musei nel rappresentare l'autenticità. Viene trattata anche la relazione tra falsificazione e il traffico illecito di beni culturali. Raccogliendo contributi di studiosi nei settori dell'archeologia, della storia dell'arte, della storia, dell'antropologia, della filosofia, della museologia, della giurisprudenza, della psicologia e delle scienze naturali, questo libro offre un'ampia disamina di alcune delle più importanti minacce e sfide che il patrimonio culturale ci ha posto e ci pone. Riconoscere queste minacce e queste sfide è cruciale per comprendere, proteggere e valorizzare tale patrimonio.