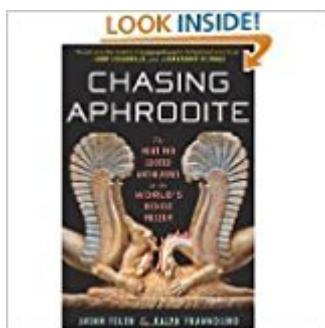


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Chasing Aphrodite: The Hunt For Looted Antiquities At The World's Richest Museum By Jason Felch And Ralph Frammolino (HARDCOVER)



Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The stories of illegally excavated art investigated in this book span decades of smuggling, legal battles, and near constant prevarication on the part of museums. It's a fascinating look at corruption and hypocrisies in museums, all the more interesting and surprising (to me, at least) because I wasn't familiar with these pieces of art or the Getty's legal woes before picking up this book. When one thinks about it, it's not remotely surprising that many of the antiquities displayed around the world in museums are looted or illegally exported, given the historical plunder of source countries. What's surprising is the complicity of museums, and the lengths to which the world's leading museums went to protect their acquisitions' veneer of legitimacy. The Getty and other museums used their missions of public education as an excuse to build prestige by acquiring looted antiquities, all the while declaring their devotion to legitimizing the antiquities trade. It's an amazingly well researched book. Complicated import/export laws, museum policies, and foreign legal proceedings are explained in a way that is easy for someone completely unfamiliar, such as myself, can easily follow.

I NEVER knew museums were into such skulduggery ! I always assumed that with their cultured airs they were cultured people of cultured tastes and impeccable standards. This book was an amazing education on how museums come by their valuable collections. This book centers on a particular scandal however, it is hard to imagine that this does not continue to some degree today. The looting of antiquities to fill the worlds' leading museums and the originating countries' fights to get the items back is a riveting read. Most museums required "incontrovertible " absolute proof of an item's being looted and sold through the black market before they would give it back to the requesting country. It was noted that this is tougher proof than is required for a murder trial ! Acquiring the treasured item....not so much proof needed. Giving it back.....more proof needed

than to convict a murderer ! Amazing. It's a great read. Highly recommend it even if you're not a museum buff and familiar with all the antiquities being discussed.

Wow - reads like a thriller and packed full of information. Not only does the author expose the ugly history of looted antiquities, but he skillfully sets forth the historical conundrum. If some of the antiquities had not been preserved in American and European museums they might not have survived war and destruction. But shouldn't countries have a right to their patrimony? Even now, archeological and cultural items are being destroyed in Iraq and Syria. The brilliance of "Chasing Aphrodite" is that it puts the issues in historical context and doesn't settle for an easy answer. He tells the story through the characters and highlights moral failures of the characters. Bravo for telling the story, weaving a thrilling tale, and focusing on the broader issues. Thank you! I will never visit a museum again without thinking of this book.

Just as money can tempt the integrity of most anyone, so can people be enamored by the beauty and mystique of centuries old artifacts. If money is no object, a museum can pursue multiple opportunities in the effort to curate important works for their galleries. How this was done, and the international efforts to prosecute illegal buying and selling, led to even more complex strategies to influence the false valuation of artifacts that fed the world market for antiquities. By the end of the first chapter you may think you have heard it all, but by then of the book, you are baffled by the depth of denial and arrogance some people possess. This is a non-fiction suitable for a box-office hit drama screenplay.

Fascinating blow by blow of the misadventures at the Getty Museum, its poor management & how one curator ultimately took a dive for the affair. I know personally one of the key actors in the drama who has confirmed to me that the books description is basically accurate. As a collector of art from a different area & period of the past, the problems of providence and evidence of when a given piece left its country of origin is very familiar

I once lived in Los Angeles and was somewhat familiar with some of the places where this all happened. It's a great discussion of the ethics of acquisition of antiquities. It also takes the reader from an old fashioned concept of collecting to modern thinking on the topic. In the "old days" if someone dug up ancient artifacts, they could take keep it, but Italy, Greece, and other ancient birthplaces of culture eventually came to the conclusion that foreigners were stealing their heritage.

Treaties among nations even wrestled the issue. It's written on the level of a "thriller." I highly recommend this book for those interested in the subject.

This book is a masterly arrangement of a huge mass of varied material into a readable book. The authors describe the once accepted view that it was better for antiques to be kept in atmosphere controlled galleries/museums rather than be allowed to deteriorate in the places where they were found, or kept in the country where they were discovered. It describes how wealthy collectors vied with each other to acquire such pieces even where the authenticity was unproven or suspect and despite the damage that occurred during looting. The sites were often found by accident and then dug up without care for the object. Furthermore the looters did not hesitate to break large items into smaller pieces in order to ship them more easily. A collateral was of course that the piece was worth a whole lot less than the complete statue, vase or whatever. This book is a real 'page turner' and I thoroughly recommend it to anyone interested in collecting, museums or preserving the past.

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