

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF

Cultural Property

VOLUME 18 2011 NUMBER 1



CAMBRIDGE

ISSN 0940-7391

Subscription Information: *International Journal of Cultural Property* (ISSN 0940-7391) is published quarterly in February, May, August, and November by Cambridge University Press for the International Cultural Property Society. Annual subscription rates for Volume 17 (2010): Institutional subscription rate, print and electronic: US \$338 in the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico; UK £198 elsewhere. Institutional subscription rate, electronic only: US \$276 in the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico; UK £163 elsewhere. Institutional subscription rate, print only: US \$310 in the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico; UK £184 elsewhere. Individual subscription rate, print only: US \$70 in the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico; UK £35 elsewhere. Single part rates, print only: US \$85 in the U.S.A., Canada, and Mexico; UK £51 elsewhere. Prices include surface postage.

Publishing, Advertising, and Subscription Offices: Cambridge University Press, 100 Brook Hill Drive, West Nyack, NY 10994-2133, USA (for USA, Canada, and Mexico); or Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8RU, England (for UK and elsewhere).

Society Inquiries: General inquiries concerning the International Cultural Property Society should be directed to Stanley N. Katz, Director, Center for the Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, Woodrow Wilson School, 428 Robertson Hall, Princeton University, Princeton, NJ 08544. Phone: 609-258-5637; fax: 609-258-1235; email: snkatz@princeton.edu

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Abstracting Information: *International Journal of Cultural Property* is indexed and abstracted in Anthropological Literature; Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts (Online Edition); ARTbibliographies Modern; Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals; Bibliography of the History of Art (BHA); British & Irish Archaeological Bibliography (Online Edition); IBZ—Internationale Bibliographie der Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Zeitschriftenliteratur; Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals; Index to Legal Periodicals & Books; Internationale Bibliographie der Rezensionen Geistes- und Sozialwissenschaftlicher Literatur.

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Cover: An example of a Yan *mingdao* (燕明刀) knife coin minted in the Warring States Period (475–221 BCE). The coins are named *mingdao* (明刀) because the character on the obverse, seen on the left, is traditionally associated with the modern Chinese character of *ming* (明). There are a large variety of inscriptions found on the reverse of these coins. In this particular sample, the characters on the reverse, seen on the right, are read as the modern Chinese character of *you* (右) and *wang* (王), which means “right” and “king” respectively. (*Photograph courtesy of David Hartill*)

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CONTENTS

VOLUME 18 (2011) NUMBER 1

ARTICLES

- The Grading of Cultural Relics in Chinese Law*
Timothy Lau 1
- Intangible Heritage and Erasure: Rethinking Cultural Preservation
and Contemporary Museum Practice*
Marilena Alivizatou 37
- The Value and Valuation of Maritime Cultural Heritage*
Stefan Claesson 61
- Stepping Stones Across the Lihir Islands: Developing Cultural Heritage
Management in the Context of a Gold-Mining Operation*
Nicholas A. Bainton, Chris Ballard, Kirsty Gillespie, and
Nicholas Hall 81
- Winning Title to Land but Not to Its Past: The Toledo Maya and
Sites of pre-Hispanic Heritage*
Shoshaunna Parks 111

COMMENT

- People's Republic of China Provisional Regulations on Art Import
and Export Administration*
Pitman Potter 131
- Instructions for Contributors 139