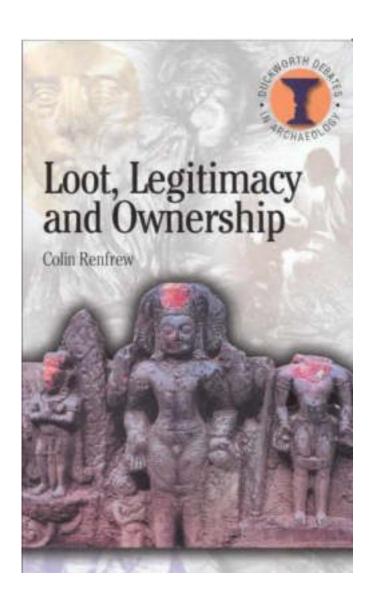
Loot, Legitimacy and Ownership



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出版者:Intl Pub Marketing Inc

出版时间:2000-10

装帧:Pap

isbn:9780715630341

In this account, Colin Renfrew illustrates how the most precious product of archaeology is the information that controlled and well-published excavations can give us about our shared human past. Clandestine and unpublished digging of archaeological sites for gain - ie looting - destroys the context and all hope of providing such information. It is the source of most of the antiquities that appear on the art market today - unprovenanced antiquities, the product of illicit traffic financed, knowingly or not by the collectors and museums that buy them on a no-questions-asked basis. This trade has turned London as well as other international centres into a 'thieves kitchen' where greed triumphs over serious appreciation of the past. Unless a solution is found to this ethical crisis in archaeology, our record of the past will be vastly diminished. This book attempts to lay bare the misunderstanding and hypocrisy that underlies that crisis.

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