Book Review

Craig Forrest. *Maritime Legacies and the Law: Effective Legal Governance of WWI Wrecks* (Edward Elgar, 2019) Hardcover: 336 pp.

The maritime losses from the World Wars, in particular the status of sunken warships have attracted the interest of not only individuals but also relevant states. The principles of international law are well-suited for the purpose of protecting gravesites *in situ*. It is therefore conceivable that states that suffered substantial maritime losses in the wars of the twentieth century may come to recognize international law's potential for affording protection to broad cultural values and not simply to what may be regarded as the rather esoteric values of "history and archaeology".

Interest in the subject of shipwrecks and underwater cultural heritage has grown enormously and a great deal has changed from a legal perspective, not least at the international level. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is now a mature treaty and is not too far from universal acceptance. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage (UCH Convention) is also in place. However, the UNESCO Convention was viewed by many as a failed initiative. Although it had succeeded in resolving a number of the core areas of contention – most notably those relating to the law of salvage and commercial exploitation – a resolution of the differences of view held by coastal states and flag states on two other crucial issues eluded negotiators.

Analyzing these interesting aspects, *Maritime Legacies and the Law: Effective Legal Governance of WWI Wrecks* by Craig Forrest of the TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, Australia, covers topics in chapters ranging from "The War at Sea; The Legacy; The Legal Framework; Legacy Wrecks as Objects of Salvage; Legacy Wrecks as Threats; Legacy Wrecks as Historical and Archaeological Sites; Legacy Wrecks as Memorials and Maritime War Graves; The UK and the UCH Convention"; and "The Future".

The author begins his manuscript by reviewing the losses of war at sea. Using the great naval battles of WWI as the background, his chapter on "The War at Sea" provides a detailed overview of the geographical diversity of WWI

naval engagements, the belligerent states involved, the nature of the naval and merchant fleets and the rate and extent of losses, including the human death toll. Next, "The Legacy" introduces the physical legacy of WWI wrecks and the values they embody while "The Legal Framework" introduces the complex matrix of national and international law that currently governs WWI legacy wrecks.

The chapter on the "Legacy Wrecks as Objects of Salvage" begins by considering the legacy wrecks as objects of salvage. The author argues that salvage law poses the greatest threat to WWI wrecks. This is followed by "Legacy Wrecks as Threats" which considers the various threats legacy wrecks pose. This includes their ability to hinder the navigation of other ships as well as the dangers they pose to the marine environment and its biodiversity due to the nature of the cargo or munitions they carried at the time of their sinking. Next, the "Legacy Wrecks as Historical and Archaeological Sites" considers the value of legacy wrecks as historical and archaeological sites. Due to significant advancements in science and technology, access to historic wrecks is easier than ever before. Consequently, in recent decades there has been a marked increase in the amount of activity taking place at WWI wrecks.

The chapter on "Legacy Wrecks as Memorials and Maritime War Graves" focuses on the important role historic wrecks play in the memorialisation of WWI, oftentimes being the final resting place of those who lost their lives at sea. Next, the chapter on "The UK and the UCH Convention" provides a detailed overview of the UCH Convention, including its main set of archaeological principles and practices which are applied to all activities directed at underwater cultural heritage. Finally, the chapter on "The Future" provides a window into the past as it is essential for WWI wrecks to be protected and preserved for future generations.

This book makes for compelling reading. It offers a unique insight into this complex and niche area of international law. As there is a limited amount of literature on this topic, this book is a notable addition and one that will be of interest to practitioners, scholars, and students alike with a keen interest in the law of the sea, cultural heritage law, and marine issues.

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