



**RIGA TECHNICAL
UNIVERSITY**

Riga Technical University
Faculty of Engineering Economics and Management
Institute of Civil Engineering and Real Estate Economics

**“SCIENTIFIC PROBLEMS OF ENGINEERING
ECONOMICS OF CONSTRUCTION AND REAL
ESTATE MANAGEMENT, REGIONS AND
TERRITORIES DEVELOPMENT ICEREE’2019”**

Organized within 61TH International Scientific
Conference of Riga Technical University
1 – 3 October 2020
Riga, Latvia

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

**RTU Press
Riga – 2020**

Organized within 61TH International Scientific Conference of Riga Technical University “Scientific Problems of Engineering Economics of Construction and Real Estate Management, Regions and Territories Development ICEREE'2020”. Book of Abstracts. Riga: RTU Press, 2020

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ISBN: 978-9934-22-511-6 (pdf)

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Published by RTU Press, Riga Technical University, 1 Kalku Street, Riga LV-1658, Latvia

DAMAGES TO ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OBJECTS CAUSED BY ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES: DAMAGE ASSESSMENT ASPECTS

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Abstract. It is widely acknowledged that the destruction and damaging of archaeological sites, illegal obtaining and trade in antiquities leads to the impoverishment of the archaeological heritage, causing irreversible losses. Damages done relate not only to losses in terms of culture and historical knowledge, but also to a wider range of socio-economic interests.

Considering social, cultural, symbolic significance and numerous uses of the heritage, it is complicated to make an accurate monetary valuation of heritage objects as well as the damage caused in result of illegal activities, e.g. illegal excavations. Due to their commodity value archaeological sites often become targets of offences committed with the aim to get antiquities. In the process of illegal obtainment of antiquities harm is being done to the archaeological site itself. Therefore, the question arises what are the criteria for assessing damage to archaeological heritage caused by illegal activities and how justified is calculation of such damage in the relevant criminal and civil proceedings? What compensation the owner of the archaeological site and other stakeholders can count on to cover their losses? In order to answer these and other questions the range of affected socio-economic interests, as well as current approach and practice in Latvia and several foreign countries are observed in the presentation.

The presentation is based on research done by A.Kairiss (PhD oec. cand., RTU) and I.Olevska (LL.M., founder of the ArtLaw.Club platform). Methods used in the research are literature review, legal framework and criminal cases analysis, documentary and statistical analysis and elements of qualitative content analysis. International comparisons were made consulting with foreign experts.

Keywords: *antiquities, archaeological heritage, damage assessment criteria, losses, socio-economic consequences*

JEL Classification: Z10, Z18, K11, K14