

GAPS, ISSUES, AND PROSPECTS:
INTERNATIONAL LAW AND THE PROTECTION OF
UNDERWATER CULTURAL HERITAGE

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The protection and preservation of underwater cultural heritage is becoming an increasingly important issue as technologies develop which allow for its exploitation. The UNESCO Convention on the Protection of Underwater Cultural Heritage ("UCH Convention") is an important step in the international regulation of this resource. This paper examines the theoretical and historical antecedents of the UCH Convention, and outlines the Convention's most significant provisions. Specifically, this paper examines how the UCH Convention protects underwater cultural heritage in six areas: internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone, the continental shelf, and the Area. This paper then examines the various concerns which arise from an analysis of the Convention, including the Convention's expansive definition of underwater cultural heritage and associated issues.