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Global Heritage: A Reader

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Introduction: Globalizing Heritage

Lynn Meskell

The international conflicts in Iraq and Yugoslavia in the 1990s and the concomitant destruction of cultural property had profound effects for the study of archaeology and heritage. Archaeologists became more politically attuned and more self-reflective by seeing their materials deployed as targets or shields and connected communities deeply affected by the cultural cleansing, destruction of memory, and erasure of their material pasts. The shelling of Dubrovnik, the destruction of the Mostar Bridge, fighter jets stationed at Ur, the looting of the Baghdad museum – all of this collateral damage unfolded before our eyes. For the field of heritage something had irrevocably changed. The world watched live the wholesale and often targeted destruction, in some cases perpetrated by the liberators themselves as they trenched, bombed, and looted their way through years of conflict. For nations like Iraq and Afghanistan, this externally wrought destruction was immediately followed by international condemnation of their local inhabitants and then calls for salvage and assistance, leading to what might be seen as a cycle of internationally sanctioned destruction then reconstruction. Cultural commentators often expressed more grief over the loss of antiquity than the loss of life, leading many to question the ethical priorities of international preservationist initiatives.

Many of us came to realize that the creation of heritage is also the creation of heritage conflict. It is commonly said that heritage is history with a point or history that matters. However, history as a discipline is the account that gets authorized after conflict rather than that which is bound up in the midst of things. And while it is true that only select fragments of the human past, in particular places and times, are reified for their cultural significance and value, heritage is deeply enmeshed with materiality. Therefore it is not simply historical accounts or narratives that have salience for living populations, but rather tangible places and objects are necessary to mobilize identifications, significations, and memorialization. The post-9/11 world has only reinforced these observations (Meskell 2002). Whether for the social performance of memory, trauma, protest, or uplift, a material past is discursively assembled to serve as a physical conduit between past and present. Since sites and objects bear witness to particular pasts and have those histories woven into their...
very fabric, they physically embody and instantiate the past in the present in a way that no textual account can fully achieve. That being said, we have increasingly come to see what many indigenous communities have long realized and indeed practiced: that these physical landscapes, monuments, and objects cannot be separated from intangible beliefs and resonances. The artificial separation of these traits is itself a symbolic violence. And when the immaterial connection that people experience disappears, the significance of those same sites and objects may also decline in the public imaginary.

Heritage, one could argue, is a supplement to history. It completes and elaborates upon what is missing from the past in the present, serving as an accretion and a substitution. Heritage is then a dangerous supplement (Derrida 1976) since our understanding of the past is always vexed by presence and absence, indeterminacy and determinacy, thereby dislocating the substance of heritage by its very construction. The slippery, mercurial nature of heritage allows it to be endlessly reinterpreted for personal and political possibility. There is no unmediated past. Our negotiations and endless iterations reveal that the past is always already a representation of a representation. Moreover, the constitution of heritage, rather than just history, often suffers from an over-burden of meaning that resists containment in any one particular location. Heritage sites thus become sites of contestation over meaning and practice, entreating obligation and responsibility, and further requiring ongoing symbolic attention and maintenance.

Heritage places and practices also require managing, governing, translating, and capitalizing, such that new political economies have developed around heritage that entail a new generation of interdisciplinary scholarship, as the contributors in this volume evince. The particular focus on materiality with which archaeology is synonymous, and which anthropology has more recently adopted, provides an appropriate methodology for taking heritage seriously. An ethnographic sensibility has also emerged around heritage work as a methodology to connect the lived experiences of these new heritage economies with broader international processes and politics. Today we may best be served if we also incorporate the technics of other disciplines: politics, law, economics, sociology, tourism, geography, ecology, and conservation. As the authors in this volume demonstrate, only by having an interdisciplinary approach can one hope to trace the capillary networks surrounding heritage from its precise local embeddings, radiating out to national arenas, and into the global circuits through which such projects gain traction and leverage.

Global heritage, I would posit, is not a thing per se, but a set of politically inflected material practices, whether one is talking about a World Heritage site, for example, or its governance through a set of international legal framings, translated and enacted at a national level and having devolved concrete effects for local residents. There are many things that remain from the past in the present that have never attained the status of heritage. Yet it would be difficult to mobilize the full swathe of heritage practices without some connectivity to the spaces, sites, objects, or practices of the past. While not underestimating the intangible aspects, it is the material dimension and its ramifications that scholars, particularly those with archaeological training, are adept at tracing. The material constitution of sites, their management, conservation, insertion into tourist economies, mobilization within national and global imaginings, and their many connected communities are all processes in which archaeologists are well versed.

Over the past decade, a great many texts have been produced that claim the title of heritage or heritage studies, many of them unmoored from any particular discipline,
methodology, or approach. This volume is different in that it explicitly brings together scholars primarily trained in archaeology and anthropology, while the collaborative authorship broadens the theoretical and geographical scope of the individual contributions. Heritage scholarship divorced from any archaeological, ethnographic, or other particular disciplinary grounding is likely to remain intellectually thin, and it is debatable whether there currently exists a cohesive discipline of heritage studies in practice (though something approaching it may be emerging). Without the methodological and intellectual commitments that disciplinary training affords, studies of heritage tend toward the descriptive and momentary, relying more on modes of representation rather than the results of long-standing fieldwork or analysis.

Developing Heritage

I have suggested here that heritage assumed a new mantle in the 1990s when the study of heritage came of age politically and intellectually. However, I do not suggest that archaeological or heritage scholarship lacked a political or moral compass before the 1990s; rather that the scale has been amplified and the global nature of that recognition has been consequential. Earlier signals of change in archaeology came with the sanction of South Africa scholars during apartheid and the formation of the World Archaeological Congress (Ucko 1987), an organization with a global and ethical mandate. Archaeology would be tested further by the renewed resurgence of ethnic and religious tension over the 1992 destruction of Ayodhya in India (Bernbeck and Pollock 1996). Engagement with larger international framings and ethical implications for archaeologists and connected communities in their efforts abroad provided a hint of things to come. No longer could practitioners claim to be objective and passive bystanders or their research to be immune from political processes and perspectives, whether at home or abroad.

Heritage work in the 1980s was largely motivated by concerns over heritage management (Cleere 1989; Hewison 1987) and the heritage industry of the West generally (but see Hall 1984, 1988; Trigger 1980, 1984). Yet in the early 1990s, the word “heritage” was still largely synonymous with descriptive accounts of estates, castles, and great houses from static, rather than dynamic and contested, perspectives. This constituted a largely unpeopled and uncontroversial field of study, being neither deeply archaeological nor anthropological in its methodology. Lacking reflection upon wider intellectual or political concerns, many mainstream academics in archaeology and anthropology would stand apart from this kind of heritage work as compared to the situation today. However, the work of geographer David Lowenthal (1985, 1996, 1998) is an exception in this regard. Given developments in Europe such as the fall of the Berlin Wall and end of the Cold War, attention increasingly turned in the mid 1990s to questions of heritage and nationalism, albeit largely in Europe and confined to the symbolic dimensions of the past rather than to lived realities on the ground. State-deployed imagery, cultural performance, and disciplinary histories (Atkinson, Banks, and O’Sullivan 1996; Díaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995) perhaps provided a necessary first step. Wider explorations of our own field practices (Meskell 1998), culpabilities, and, ultimately, responsibilities to others came later.

During the same period, ethnographic accounts were already focusing on national and colonial heritage projects of nostalgia, rehabilitation, and revisionism (Herzfeld 1991; Mitchell 1988; Ranger 1989). Anthropologists worked within
local communities to see how state imperatives alongside global forces shaped
people’s lives in the shadow of antiquity, but also traced how these groups resisted
and crafted alternative narratives of the past. Other ethnographers looked at heri-
tage through the lens of performance and popular culture, folklore, and museums
to track regimes of display and consumption (Karp and Lavine 1991; Kirshenblatt-
Gimblett 1998). At roughly the same time, British-trained social geographers focused
on colonial legacies abroad (Gathercole and Lowenthal 1994) as well as issues of
space, tourism, and economics generally (Ashworth 1995; Graham, Ashworth, and
Tunbridge 2000; Hardy 1988).

The 1990s saw heritage research embedded within a “politics of the past”
approach. Scholars from some settler-colonial nations like Australia readily embraced
an early post-colonial critique (Byrne 1996; Langford 1983; Meehan 1995) and
have become associated with critical heritage interventions (Byrne 2003; Lilley
2000; Logan 2013; Lydon 2009; Smith and Wobst 2005). Conversely, disciplinary
reflexivity in the United States proved more difficult and indigenous intervention
often met with a recalcitrant positivist discipline. However, new forms of engaged
scholarship and collaborative field practice actively sought to ameliorate this nega-
tive history of relationships (Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2010; Colwell-Chanthaphonh
and Ferguson 2004, 2007; Ferguson and Colwell-Chanthaphonh 2006; Silliman
2008; Stoffle, Zedeno, and Halmo 2001). Newly defined nations like South Africa
offered contexts from which to ask whether it was possible to be post-colonial at
all, or if the architecture of oppression could ever truly be erased. Numerous case
studies around historic sites and landscapes exposed tensions over ethnic difference
and indigeneity, the inequities of land and labor, economic freedoms versus civic
rights, and the continued unfreedom of the poor (Hall 2001, 2005; Meskell 2005,

The intersection of ethics, archaeology, and heritage broadly emerged during the
same period (Colwell-Chanthaphonh and Ferguson 2004; Green 1984; Lynott and
Wylie 2000; Meskell and Pels 2005; Messenger 1999; Vitelli 1996). While not always
directly co-terminal with heritage work, questions of ethics, particularly transcultur-
tural concerns, have impacted the types of topics and political projects recently
undertaken. No longer would it be possible to consider research about the past as
immune from the present, cloaked in scientific immunity and neatly segregated from
the locales and locals that support our work. Heritage discourse, the tacit universals
within its international framing, and the implications for those outside the frame also
came to the fore (Smith 2004, 2006). We would later see this ethical commitment
develop into a much broader, and often more fraught, set of debates about heritage
and human rights, questioning whether such conjunctions were possible, desirable,
or even operational given the limitations of international instruments (Disko 2010;
Hodder 2010; Jokilehto 2012; Lilley 2009; Meskell 2009b, 2010; O’Keefe 2000;

Historically, while nationalism has been of sustained interest to archaeology and
anthropology, recent scholarship extends beyond the narrow understandings of the
1980s and 1990s to a broader interrogation of sovereignty and internationalism.
Despite the recognition of ever-expanding globalization, we are currently witnessing
a hardening of state boundaries and increasing anxieties concerning migration and
border crossings, alongside transnational flows of capital, labor, ideas, and cultures
(Brown 2010). As a result of these tensions, some scholars have turned to consider-
ations of cosmopolitanism as a way to reconcile the entangled politics and responsibil-
ities that stem from today’s burgeoning local, national, and international connectivities
(Appiah 2006; Breckenridge et al. 2002; Hannerz 2006; Meskell 2009; Werbner 2008). Attending to issues of scale has become a priority and it is increasingly necessary to tack between multiple levels of fieldwork and analysis to grasp the fuller understanding of the heritage landscape. Given the vast scope of these emergent international domains and complexities, heritage research cannot simply describe changes within the conservation arena, for instance, without considering collaboration or communities; nor can they deal with an issue like development without being cognizant of dislocated populations, site destruction, new infrastructures, international capital, and so on.

In tandem with the ramping up of socio-economic and political developments impacting upon the heritage sphere, our methodologies have also changed and expanded. It is more common today for researchers to draw from, and integrate, a broad swathe of methods including archival analysis, archaeological fieldwork, material culture and museum studies, economic analysis, and ethnography. Much of this also aims to be collaborative and multidisciplinary. Scholarship has, at the same time, become both more qualitative and quantitative. It is also the case that significant regions of the world have opened up for investigation that were previously little studied, such as Asia (Daly and Winter 2011; Winter 2014), while other nations emerging from post-Soviet, post-colonial, and post-conflict contexts (Giblin 2014; Plets et al. 2013; Shnirelman 2012; Winter 2007) are pursuing liberated heritage agendas. Just a decade or two ago, limited fieldwork would have been possible in countries like Russia, China, Cambodia, Myanmar, Rwanda, Albania, Armenia, and so on. Today the possibilities for heritage research have greatly expanded in both scope and complexity.

Interdisciplinary Heritage

As the foregoing suggests, the study of heritage has recently gained maturity and political awareness, following in large part from the importance and leverage now placed upon heritage places by nation states on the global stage. The impact of these transnational social, economic, and political forces is shaping the field practices, discourses, and disciplines that scholars now need to actively engage with. This volume contributes to that emergent dialogue, suggesting that it is no longer possible to capture the scope of international heritage without proper consideration of global institutions, national politics, and local developments and social movements.

Taken together, these chapters reflect the burgeoning scale of heritage scenarios today as they affect millions of people across the globe. While the issues we outline are certainly timely, and the disciplines we draw upon diverse, we are bound together by our focus on ethnographic and embedded perspectives, as well as a commitment to ethical engagement. The chapters are broadly grouped in three overlapping categories: institutions, politics, and economies. Writing together as we do provides an opportunity to embrace multiple geographies, disciplines, literatures, and case studies. Each of the chapters develops two strands of scholarly contribution to the field of heritage. The first part of each paper reviews of the most compelling recent literature for each theme, while the second describes innovative projects that chart the way forward for future heritage directions. Structuring the volume in this way is an attempt to capture the current dynamism of the field, to be as geographically inclusive as possible, and to reflect the many perspectives and writings that have been produced in various fields.
Institutions

In this section institutions might refer to formal agencies and structures such as UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Science and Cultural Organization) and its various international conventions, while it might also encompass global visions such as international conservation and rights movements. Both reflect upon the overarching settings and frameworks that have come to aspire to universal adoption and implementation. Meskell and Brumann focus specifically on UNESCO’s World Heritage program as part of a growing program of intra-disciplinary scholarship emanating from anthropology, archaeology, economic, political science, and law. And, while UNESCO has a global vision and remit, their work underscores that (just as in other globalizing arenas) the creation of UNESCO and the emphasis on global patrimony has resulted in reinforcing the interests of nation-states. The desire for a universal heritage remains tightly sutured to national identification, prestige, socioeconomic benefits, and the recognition of a particular modernity. Indeed the state continues to be a particularly intransigent force in all of UNESCO’s operations by the very structure of the organization that has states as its members. As they describe, since UNESCO is an intergovernmental agency, the nation states, or States Parties, are in fact the most powerful decision makers in the World Heritage process, particularly those that enjoy representation on the World Heritage Committee.

Their own respective research relies on a number of integrated analyses from ethnographic fieldwork to archival and econometric analyses. Meskell looks at the dynamics of the BRICS nations (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) to underline the pacting and political bargaining power of these emergent nations in securing their individual World Heritage site inscriptions and at the same time in staving off any potential World Heritage in Danger listings. Ethnographic observation, particularly at World Heritage Committee meetings, demonstrates how some alliances are strategic and shifting, and might, at any one time, be based on religious, regional, political, or economic linkages. Brumann emphasizes the role of other world regional leaders such as Mexico and Egypt in what he sees as the emergence of a new mode of operation in the World Heritage Committee. He suggests that we have recently witnessed a conceptual shift in the World Heritage Committee from the largely expert-driven national delegations of the 1990s, led by conservation specialists heavily steeped in national traditions and legal frameworks, to the dominance of the career diplomats sent by member states to UNESCO. This too, he suggests, reflects the growing importance of World Heritage within nationalist agendas.

Together Meskell and Brumann argue that an embedded and ethnographic approach is necessary to capture the dynamic political complexities as they unfold. Similar to other anthropologists studying UN organizations, they demonstrate that World Heritage processes have global impacts, albeit in often unexpected and unpredictable ways that are not always revealed in official texts or agendas. Relying solely on archives or online documents may in fact mislead researchers since substantive political issues are often masked as technical ones. Documentary data only gain depth and salience if researchers have the necessary insights into the processes that produced them. Coombe and Weiss make a similar claim in the sphere of human rights and neoliberalism, arguing that examining heritage requires a more anthropologically nuanced and theoretically informed understanding if scholars are to address the motivations behind heritage regulation.

Coombe and Weiss are concerned with the intersection of governmentality, neoliberalism, and rights within the heritage sphere, how it has been previously
understood, and where the productive tensions remain. They argue that rights-based practices and discourses function as a means by which the limits of governmentality are expressed by those who bring their own cultural resources to bear upon the very same governmental demands that consider culture as a resource. Here neoliberalism is understood largely as a political process rather than simply an ideological or an economic program. Recent heritage work then recognizes neoliberal restructuring, not as a withdrawal of the state, but as a new distribution of governmental powers in which nations, sovereignty, territories, and rights are all reconfigured. New forms of governmentality are proliferating, they suggest, as reflected in the increasing desire to map and inventory cultural properties, conferring legibility through new forms of documentation, archiving, and access. However, Coombe and Weiss do not position communities and other stakeholders as simply the passive bystanders in such processes or, in fact, see governments and communities as oppositional. Instead they suggest that “heritage as government” operates in and through “community” as the subject of its technological address and the object of its activities, thereby activating a semi-autonomous political agent.

In respect to human rights, Coombe and Weiss argue that they should not simply be viewed as institutionally compromised obstacles to social justice. Whereas prior heritage research focused on the right to participate in cultural life narrowly construed, these authors posit a more expansive remit that interrogates how human rights vocabularies provide rhetorical resources with which to protest injustice, insist upon new forms of social justice, and assert distinctive understandings of human dignity in diverse social fields. This “social life of rights” approach traverses multiple scales across state, regional, and international regimes since rights talk is mobilized transnationally by international agencies, NGOs, aid institutions, social movements, and so on. Coombe specifically explores culturalized rights in the Latin American context as they intersect with the emergence of entrepreneurial cultural communities. Heritage and cultural rights have been mobilized in numerous Amazonian communities to secure territorial rights and responsibilities for traditional medicine, bilingual education, and archaeological sites. One salient example is the Potato Park in Peru, where six Quechua-speaking villages have constituted themselves as a community in line with national legislation thus bypassing the arduous process of securing indigenous land title. Coombe underlines how this autonomous territory is rooted in a local responsibility for potato biodiversity at the global scale. Thus the communities are employing resources from indigenous and cultural heritage regimes with other forms of neoliberal government in order to safeguard and revitalize their practices.

Weiss draws upon her fieldwork on liberation in South Africa to show how the nation’s first democratic governments utilized heritage as a multicultural national platform for post-apartheid recognition and reconciliation. National heritage institutions, she states, have increasingly adopted a neoliberal program of heritage as a self-sustaining component of urban revitalization and tourist development in which socioeconomic rights are to be delivered through market-based imperatives. Specifically, she focuses upon the growing number of informal settlements in South Africa where over four million people live today. The struggle against apartheid was also a struggle against landlessness. Yet the spaces of informal communities, shack settlements, slums, and transitory encampments represent some of the most egregious exclusions of modern rights under neoliberal governmentality. Weiss examines informal communities that have self-capacitated by harnessing traditional practices
as resources, in particular the shack dweller movement whose activities form the front line of urban rights struggles in South Africa. Coombe and Weiss remind us that engaging in this type of fieldwork entails new ethical concerns for heritage research by recognizing these shifting sites of empowerment and vulnerability and their paradoxical capacities as resources for emergent political agency.

Kersel and Luke take up other forms of institutional heritage and politics in their chapter on cultural diplomacy and civil society. They acknowledge the long history of world-making through heritage diplomacy and the institutional effects of such projects globally to forge international relationships, enhance mutual understanding, and assuage political tensions. However, in the twenty-first century, heritage diplomacy is presented and packaged to the public as promoting the ideals of democracy and civil society. This affords new leverage around heritage places and practices through the intercalation of cultural diplomacy, foreign relations, and soft power. Many of these projects are often laced with overt agendas that instantiate new imperialisms. The “West knows best” stance, Kersel has argued, is reflected across the heritage landscape from the level of local projects to the global guidelines promulgated by international agencies such as ICOM (International Council of Museums), ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites), and UNESCO. But they also show how new players such as Middle Eastern and Asian nations are now driving archaeological and heritage development in countries from Cambodia to Sudan. The directives, whether from international or national agencies, are often the driving mechanisms behind what is preserved, what is excavated, and what is on display as representative of a particular locality, nation, or culture.

Why is heritage now seen as such a powerful diplomatic tool worldwide? Kersel and Luke argue that foreign assistance for heritage operates as a soft power, a partnership that is considered above the coercive sphere of politics, economics, or military aspirations. Thus heritage occupies a highly strategic place in development agendas because it is through attraction, rather than force, that results are achieved. They provide the example of the US Ambassador’s Fund that has supported over 750 projects in 132 countries at a cost of some US$ 40 million. Initially aimed at supporting the preservation, rehabilitation, and promotion of places of historical significance for local constituencies, the aims of grants have shifted through time to support initiatives that might combat negative perceptions of the United States worldwide following the invasion of Iraq. In the aftermath of September 11, 2001 and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the Ambassadors Fund increased funding to predominantly Islamic nations and projects associated with Islam. Using the language of UNESCO and actively promoting the “heritage of mankind,” the US effectively distanced itself as solely responsible for the destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq or Afghanistan. This developed into a special allocation solely for World Heritage sites within the Ambassadors Fund, the aim being to convey a softer side of the United States abroad, one invested in the protection of “our shared heritage.”

Luke provides another very different model of international aid and diplomacy through the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, or TIKA. Established in 1992 with an overt political, religious, and cultural mandate to support Turkish heritage and ideals, she explains that TIKA is now the fourth largest agency for international aid. TIKA’s model is aggressive and highly strategic, from Albania to Senegal. One of their high profile initiatives is directed towards Islamic heritage, specifically the restoration of mosques in the Balkans, the Middle East, and Africa. Like the previous US example, TIKA has strategically partnered with UNESCO, whether on Islamic projects in Albania or components of the Silk Road nomination for World
Heritage inscription. Kersel and Luke trace how all of these institutions effectively contribute to the forms of heritage understood and presented to the global public, while simultaneously reinforcing the idea that other countries care about culture. Yet, in the cases explored here, the “culture” or heritage identified and restored is extremely specific, targeted, and politically or religiously expedient to the funder.

Further exploring the ways in which World Heritage is adopted and deployed globally, Byrne and Ween address overlapping classifications of nature and culture and its subsequent effects. They consider the impacts of this classificatory regime on indigenous lifeways but also the opportunities for indigenous and non-indigenous groups to challenge and innovate around key World Heritage principles and mechanisms. Described as “boundary work,” they recognize the colonial underpinnings of World Heritage, but also the issue of scale it affords and how its mechanisms might encourage new kinds of agency and resistance, echoing Coombe and Weiss’s chapter. World Heritage place-making, often replete with a culture–nature dualism, is both received and struggled against by those on the margins of society and the global order. Byrne and Ween further unpack the overlapping domains of archaeology and cultural heritage practice, arguing that these domains have played a role in sustaining the culture–nature dualism.

The institutionalization of nature and culture as separate has a long history, steeped in Euro-modern culture that has no exact counterpart in non-Western traditional society, although it has assumed global significance through international instruments promulgated by UNESCO or IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature). Looking specifically at the premises of the Sacred Natural Sites initiative by the IUCN, Byrne imputes that the magical–supernatural aspect of local belief is translated into religious constructs that are more compatible with the conservation movement’s secular–rational mentality than with the ontologies of local popular religion. Moreover, environmental protection is positioned as the endpoint of religion and therefore local communities are seen as revering a nature that remains fundamentally separate, however closely entwined they are with it. Heritage conservation and curation, whether designated as natural or cultural, is deemed paramount by these international agencies. Drawing on his extensive fieldwork in Asia, Byrne outlines how the heritage governance in Asia has long involved the “clearance” of zones identified for conservation of ancient monuments, resulting in the resettlement of local inhabitants whose lifestyle is judged incompatible with conservation objectives.

Ween draws on two case studies, Kluane in Alaska and Laponia in Sweden, to elucidate how World Heritage governance still divides culture and nature. Both are national parks populated by indigenous groups who are involved in subsistence activities. Significantly, Kluane was inscribed as a natural World Heritage site in 1979 when the concept of “wilderness” was accepted uncritically, whereas Laponia was listed as a mixed site in 1996 after the concept had come under greater scrutiny. Thus the management of Kluane continues to embody many classic features of the colonial mentality of conservation that can be seen across Africa or the Asia. A science-based natural resource management model provides the dominant foundation for governing nature: the mapping, zoning, and ordering of land; the classification of species and species populations; and the management board’s governance scheme determines decision-making regarding nature. Laponia, on the other hand, provides an example of how indigenous groups are working within and against the global machinery of World Heritage to create new models of environmental management that acknowledge the co-existence of multiple life. As Byrne and Ween make explicit, these reconceptualizations might have global applicability but in no
way do they imply a transcendence of the history of North–South power relations or the scalar history of relations between international institutions, nation-states, and indigenous peoples.

Each of the chapters highlights overarching heritage categories and frameworks that invite universal adoption and implementation. They also convey the consequences of these globalizing arenas, recognizing that heritage increasingly participates in world-making projects whether through diplomatic efforts, conservation movements, or indigenous forums. The protection of World Heritage, the impacts of international politics and law, human rights, and humanitarian programs all demonstrate cosmopolitan aspirations for the global good. Yet, at the same time, the resilience of the nation-state cannot be sidelined since capitalizing on culture is entwined in neoliberal and governmental projects. In some cases this also affords creative spaces for redefinition and repurposing of the past, as well as offering leverage for social justice and recognition.

**Politics**

The next group of chapters also examines this scalar history of relations but does so through a shared commitment to communities, while also being attendant to global politics as well as institutions. Colwell and Joy track how the everyday production and consumption of heritage impacts upon living societies, particularly indigenous groups. A new generation of scholars has increasingly turned its attention to understanding the complex intersection of people and things and how heritage work might serve the well-being of descendant communities and invested stakeholders as much as material objects and historical places. While communities were never completely out of the frame, only a few decades ago most debates centered on the competing heritage rights of nations and humanity as a whole. Considerations of local communities have emerged more recently because of multiple converging lines of argument and social critiques, in particular in North America, New Zealand, and Australia. In post-colonial settings, control over who owns, has access to, or claims rights of representation for cultural heritage can best be understood in terms of dignity and well-being. It is in this vein that Colwell and Joy consider the specific contexts surrounding heritage tensions and ethical responsibilities, whether in the American Southwest or in Mali, across international, national, and intranational scales.

In the case of Mali, Joy recounts how the World Heritage site of Djenné reflects an elite, Eurocentric vision of cultural heritage that is imposed upon a disenfranchised local community. UNESCO’s international vision of the town is limited to architecture and archaeology, whereas the residents of Djenné struggle for survival amidst food insecurity, political uncertainty, and precarious livelihoods. In terms of ethics, Djenné’s World Heritage status might detract from the most pressing issues facing the community, namely the radical global economic asymmetry that has led to the conditions of poverty found in Mali today. Capturing the global media in 2012, the destruction of sites around Timbuktu by the radical Islamist group Ansar Dine led to international vocal condemnation from UNESCO and many international leaders. That cultural destruction even served as a catalyst for the French military intervention in the conflict. In a post-colonial setting, money might flow into Mali in the name of cultural heritage protection, yet this still leaves unanswered the question of global economic asymmetries exacerbated by trade restrictions that are imposed by the very same countries providing financial aid for heritage. Joy asks who precisely
is cultural heritage being preserved for in this instance, and on what basis are we sacrificing the present for the future through the protection of things?

Moving from the international to the intranational frame, Colwell looks to the American Southwest to trace how ethics have become infused with heritage management, particularly amongst descendant and indigenous communities seeking to exert greater control over historical objects and places. These developments have emerged on a number of fronts. Some archaeological projects are training the next generation to work more ethically and effectively with communities. Other research projects have used multivocal methodologies to incorporate the viewpoints of multiple stakeholders about the past. Moreover, Native communities have established their own museums and used them as vehicles to preserve, promote, and perpetuate their traditional cultures. In the arena of repatriation, new conversations and projects seek to overcome the colonialist histories of museums as sites of power over heritage, and museums now regularly seek out the participation of descendant communities. In sum, Colwell asserts that the implementation of ethics has enabled issues about who has control over heritage, whose voices are heard, and who benefits from heritage to come to the fore.

Ndoro and Wijesuriya ask pointedly whose heritage is it that we are managing and conserving? Through an examination of historical developments in conservation across Asia and Africa, they remind us that heritage management was practiced in these regions long before European colonization. Throughout Asia, Buddhist, Hindu, and Confucian worldviews influenced how the remnants of the past were perceived and commemorated. Across Africa, traditional religions and later Islam and Christianity guided how heritage places were used and managed. Traditional systems of care have evolved through time and still have established approaches: in some instances the custodianship of culture and nature pre-dates or was parallel to Western methods. Yet the methods introduced in both continents under colonial rule still have lasting legacies that are further reinforced today by the efforts of international heritage agencies. Their chapter takes up the challenges and contradictions that arise from the historical impositions of those colonial heritage management systems today in a globalized world.

Ndoro visits the case of Tsodilo Cultural Landscape in Botswana to demonstrate how the concept of a protected areas management system has influenced the governance of World Heritage sites across Africa. Like Byrne and Ween, he questions the validity of a natural science model of conservation for living communities. Tsodilo was the ancestral home of the San and Hambakushe who have subsequently been marginalized in its conservation and management. After World Heritage inscription these groups were considered a threat to archaeological and heritage work and to site conservation, due to their traditional subsistence practices of hunting and herding. Underlining again the problems associated with the nature–culture dualism, Tsodilo’s protected areas management plan has been readily exported throughout Africa as exemplary, whether for natural or cultural heritage places. Ndoro argues that site trajectories like Tsodilo are dynamic and their management cannot be standardized through international instruments that are narrowly constituted from one part of the globe. Moreover, heritage professionals need to address and support “community-based systems” that have been marginalized by state-based systems and Western conservation discourse. Such state frameworks are incapable of providing a holistic and sustainable management of local cultural heritage in isolation.

Wijesuriya describes the legacy of French colonialism and conservation interventions by the École Française d’Extrême-Orient into the vast World Heritage site of
Angkor. A system of new regulations has impinged upon traditional land use and practices by local communities, while inhabitants near the temples of Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom were relocated. In the 1990s, after the Cambodian civil war ended, conservation work resumed under the auspices of French and Japanese agencies and experts. Further tensions arose when a new set of restrictions banned local residents from rice cultivation, collecting forest products, and grazing cattle that had long supported traditional livelihoods. These harsh restrictions have led to impoverishment and unemployment, along with most recently intimidation, violence, and curtailment of human rights. This is ironic since the restoration and tourist development of Angkor is often held up in the international community as one of the few success stories involving heritage humanitarianism and post-conflict rebuilding.

While much heritage work has historically focused on politics and nationalism, González-Ruibal and Hall address a burgeoning scholarship that deals with the fraught legacies of heritage violence, as an outgrowth of global, civil, and ethnic wars, genocides, colonialism, and dictatorship. Specifically these authors examine civil conflict along ethnic lines in Sri Lanka, violence perpetrated by the state across a range of countries in South America, and circumstances wherein the heritage of violence has an international dimension. They also consider the proliferation of engaged practice and memory work that surrounds conflictual heritage and suggest this work will continue to gain momentum and significance in the future. While this might sound positive, some troubling aspects have lately emerged. Without political, aesthetic, or other conventions that define and limit that for which heritage can be mobilized, the commodification of the past is not restricted to positive values and goods. It can also embrace pain, disease, trauma, or violence; one striking example of this cannibalization of suffering is the phenomenon of dark tourism.

González-Ruibal and Hall draw important distinctions that enable researchers to understand the processes surrounding conflict with more nuance; for example, whether a conflict is currently active or not, or whether conflicts are denied by those who control the territory (such as in the Armenian genocide), thereby produce heritage not in situ, but through diaspora. Ongoing struggles, like the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, hamper forms of memorialization and the transformation of places into heritage sites. Moreover, if a conflict has ended with the victory of a specific side or through international intervention, this too significantly effects the politics of remembrance. Other factors affecting the status of conflict and potential memorialization include the characteristics and extent of state intervention, or whether there is a shared master narrative or not. In one case study, González-Ruibal reveals the negative heritage of twentieth-century dictatorships in South America. In the aftermath of authoritarian regimes, the demand for evidence forged a broad alliance of heritage practitioners with expertise in oral and written testimony, forensic research, and archaeology. In his view this continent-wide system of violence has a distinctive heritage that is inscribed in the materiality of places, buildings, and the apparatus of terror, all of which are interwoven with personal testimony and memory.

Hall reflects on the more recent experience of conflict and violence in Sri Lanka, where between 80,000 and 100,000 people died. While defined by local religious and ethnic tension, its narrative is inseparable from wider claims to heritage rights that were intensified by UNESCO’s involvement and World Heritage inscription. Inflamed by ethnic stereotyping, interpretations of the island’s cultural heritage have been cast as a unilinear narrative of successive Buddhist states that withstood external aggression, on the basis of some two millennia of architecture, art, and written texts. Yet neither the documentary nor the archaeological evidence unequivocally supports the
state’s account. The case of Sri Lanka demonstrates how heritage can be deployed as an artefact of aggression during conflict and how international agencies, claiming to be above politics, can be co-opted by partisan positions. Hall believes that, since all claims to cultural identities and rights are based on accounts of the past and thus inseparable to the determinants of violence, it is difficult to foresee reconciliation without first resolving the nation’s master narrative.

De Cesari and Herzfeld take a spatialized view on heritage violence and exclusion. They acknowledge the close association between the heritagization of places and radical shifts in their social geographies, most often evictions, that can be observed both in the past in the service of nationalist and colonial violence and today as part of the neoliberal forces that have increasingly supplanted those older formations. They detail the ways in which heritage is used to support claims to particular places and to shape these places. Paralleling arguments made by Coombe and Weiss, they note how the inhabitants of these spaces deploy heritage for rights of residence, for better livelihoods, for spaces of public debate and so on. As outlined above, materiality is a key component in all forms of heritage attachment, anchoring struggles over place, resistance movements, memory, and belonging.

Herzfeld further develops his concept of spatial cleansing, namely the social and cultural evacuation of space, that takes place typically when urban areas are monumentalized and the local population is removed either by eviction in the name of a contested “common good” or due to escalating property values and market pressures. Spatial cleansing is also related to the mobilizations of heritage by both state and non-state actors as a governmental technique that impinges upon social life in areas inhabited by people variously classified as dangerous. Neoliberal tactics might involve seemingly benign actors and concepts, such as NGOs and their rhetoric, to consolidate control over value-laden spaces such as historic centers, national heritage, and so on. These tactics co-opt the symbolism of nationalism to serve ends that clearly transcend national borders and have more to do with capital accumulation than with the symbolic importance of capital cities. Drawing on his fieldwork in Bangkok, Herzfeld draws attention to broader conflicts over the interpretations of law, history, and belonging. At the site of Pom Mahakan questions remain in a long-standing battle over who has the ultimate responsibility for curating this important heritage site.

In the Palestinian examples De Cesari describes, conflicting interpretations over heritage likewise serve the aims of disputants to a territorial conflict. Heritage discourse can fuel inter-ethnic and intranational conflict alike, as González-Ruibal and Hall’s chapter also illustrates. De Cesari maps recent developments particularly in fraught contexts where heritage as place-making shifts under new forms of neoliberal governance, securitization, and dispossession. One example is the expropriation of Wadi Hilwah, also called the City of David, outside the Old City of Jerusalem. Here an exclusionary narrative of the past has been mobilized to displace Palestinians and their living heritage and urban life in favor of the new settlers. She recounts the destructive potential of archaeology where Israeli excavationencroaches upon, besieges, and sometimes destroys their homes. Since the early years of the state, archaeology has played a key function in Israeli society and state-building process. Palestinian residents must further endure violence from border police while living with the constant threat of demolition or expropriation, and are thus forced to live a subjugated and less than urban life in a heavily securitized neo-biblical landscape of ruins and fences. De Cesari reiterates that Wadi Hilwah is not an exception but reproduces a pattern critical to the workings of the Israeli nationalist–colonial project.
Such examples remind us that spatial cleansing may veer dangerously close to ethnic cleansing, and that the processes of colonization itself cannot be relegated to history. This set of chapters draws our attention to negative aspects of heritage by examining global, civil, and ethnic wars, genocides, colonialism, and spatial cleansing. In doing so the authors remind us that heritage conflict cannot be consigned to the past but rather has decidedly material effects today. They moreover underline that organizations are not neutral, that their impacts can be devastating over the long term, and that, for many, being post-colonial is a desire rather than a reality. They propose other histories of conservation and management, indeed other ways of doing heritage, preserving it as a living practice. They suggest we refocus, to see something called “heritage” from a local point of view, but perhaps not always to foreground heritage above all else. Instead, heritage might be seen to offer a lens onto other more pressing issues, including global asymmetry, histories of oppression, desires for recognition and rights, and struggles for self-determination.

Economics

The constitution of global heritage increasingly relies on the multifarious flows of global capital coupled with interventions from international development programs. Labadi and Gould unpack the entwined histories of development and sustainability in their chapter and consider the connection of these two major themes to communities. Specifically they are concerned with the theoretical, practical, and ethical implications for heritage projects that are pursued under the banner of sustainable development. There are many critics of development programs, including heritage specialists, who have shown how external aid coupled with technocratic expertise has endorsed corrupt and undemocratic nation-state governments primarily at the expense of the poorest citizens, rather than enhancing people’s lives and capabilities. That critique also favors moving away from purely economic metrics to broader measures of well-being so that development can also extend to enhancing the capacity of individuals to pursue their own objectives and ensuring that they have the freedom and capability to do so. And, while slow to emerge, culture and heritage are now finally being realized in several UN resolutions focusing on the importance of culture and sustainable development. The linkage between sustainable development and communities gained official recognition in UNESCO conventions from the 1990s, while the World Heritage Convention only became officially associated with the notion of sustainable development from 2002 onwards.

In recent decades economists have developed a full complement of analytical tools designed to place a monetary value on tangible and intangible aspects of culture. Labadi and Gould remind us, however, that these economic measures do not capture the full contribution of cultural and heritage resources to the lives of people. Their chapter features case studies that address issues of sustainable development from both top-down and bottom-up perspectives to address the practical economic and political challenges faced by community-based heritage. Gould’s detailed work in the Parchi della Val di Cornia, Italy analyzes the development of a park system designed to include and support the local community. The park network operates through a jointly owned company and numerous sites and buildings have been restored and repurposed to serve as restaurants, meeting spaces, museums, and other park facilities. Charting its variable successes and vulnerabilities, Gould shows how the fate of the park system is susceptible to economic and political forces – local, national, and international – that can undermine community-based sustainability.
Labadi focuses on Mahabodhi Temple Complex, India to consider the wider issues of infrastructural development and the management of mass tourism that are central in sustainable approaches to heritage sites globally. Given the importance of this site, new infrastructures including an airport, hotels, visitor facilities, and foreign land acquisition have both flourished and impinged upon conservation and communities. Sustainable development as a concept is difficult to translate and implement at World Heritage pilgrimage sites like Mahabodhi, specifically in the face of numerous international, religious, economic, and social pressures. Furthermore, governments and local authorities do not routinely collect the data necessary to evaluate the success of their management efforts. Labadi and Gould reinforce the idea that bureaucratic inertia, a lack of data and metrics, external economic forces, and local political conflict can all impact outcomes, such as community disempowerment or economic failure, which are the opposites of sustainability. They argue cogently that academic training in the heritage sphere should focus not simply on the archaeological record or local communities, but also on the global and national economic and political forces that ultimately shape the future of heritage sustainability.

Lafrenz Samuels and Lilley continue this theme by highlighting the key roles played by economic development in bringing heritage to the international stage and the central actors involved in heritage internationalism. At one level, these relationships combine archaeological research and heritage management into the compliance work needed for meeting the social and environmental safeguards set by multilateral development banks and private corporations, what they term *heritage in development*. At another, cultural heritage is considered a resource to be developed for economic growth and thus defined as *heritage as development*, or simply heritage development. This work is often undertaken by the same actors as those setting safeguards, including development banks and corporations, but might also embrace transnational actors such as NGOs, global cultural resource management firms, and professional networks. Lafrenz Samuels and Lilley describe the pervasive economic incentivizing encapsulated in corporate social responsibility (CSR) as well as the fallouts from compliance archaeology projects in international settings. Consultancy culture is on the rise in the arena of archaeology and heritage, bringing with it a new swathe of ethical concerns and responsibilities.

Considering the politics of development, Lilley locates the effects of escalating transnational efforts within compliance archaeology, or *heritage in development*, particularly via public private partnerships or PPPs. He documents one attempt to formulate a global compliance regime, involving a mining company and a university partnering, to develop a resource guide for integrating cultural heritage management into communities. He believes that while advances are being made around heritage issues with and through transnational corporations, these measures have not been universally accepted within the archaeological and heritage community. There has been vocal condemnation of any such involvement with industry, especially the resource extraction sector.

The escalating capitalization of culture is further underscored by the World Bank’s global dominance in developing heritage, specifically in North Africa, as described by Lafrenz Samuels. One of their first large-scale heritage projects was Fez in Morocco, initiated at the behest of the UNESCO World Heritage Centre. Fez acts as a global case study demonstrating the promise of cultural heritage for economic growth and poverty reduction. Increasingly national governments nominate sites for inscription on the World Heritage List with the aim of attracting private investment and boosting tourism revenues. And, as Kersel and Luke likewise indicate, participating in the World