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How conceptions of heritage collided: local responses to statues and sites on Java in the 1910s and 1920s

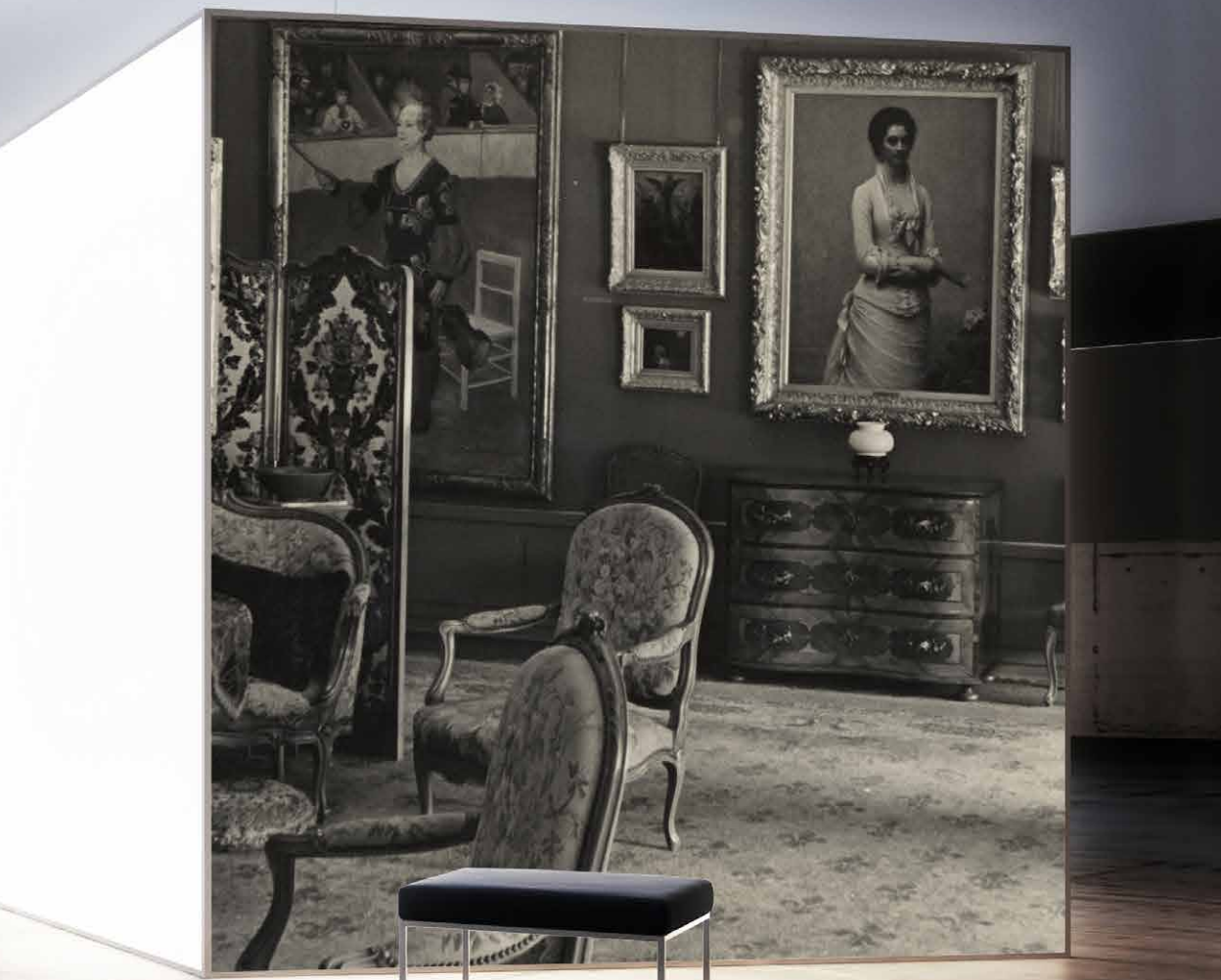
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MUSEUMS, COLLECTIONS AND SOCIETY

YEARBOOK 2021

Holly O'Farrell and Pieter ter Keurs (eds)



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Contents

- 7 Foreword**
- 9 Going through the Wars. Juxtaposition as Critique in the Ho Chi Minh Museum, Vietnam**
Graeme Were (University of Bristol)
- 25 Post preservation or Social Repair? Curating the local in Southern China**
Michael Rowlands (UCL) and Sun Jing (Normal University, Quanzhou)
- 41 The Emergence of Museums of Modern Art in the Netherlands 1920s – 1940s. Their Collections, Display, and Architecture**
Laurie Kalb Cosmo
- 61 Opposing the Ugly. The Reception of Manet and the Struggle against the Primitive**
Pieter ter Keurs
- 89 Early Modern Grave Robbing. Egyptian Objects in the Collection of Bernardus Paludanus (1550-1633)**
Marika Keblusek
- 103 How conceptions of heritage collided. Local responses to statues and sites on Java in the 1910s and 1920s**
Arthur Crucq
- 121 Endangered heritage. Protecting the vanishing textile heritage of Jordan through art and assembly**
Fatima Abbadi and Holly O'Farrell

131 **Beyond Science, Health and Art. The role of intuition and empathy in healthcare and museums**

135 **MCS Report 2021**

Pieter ter Keurs

How conceptions of heritage collided

Local responses to statues and sites on Java in the 1910s and 1920s

Arthur Crucq

Introduction

During the time Frederik David Kan Bosch was head of the Archaeological Service, there was increasingly a focus on the reconstruction of Buddhist and Hindu temples in order for the people of Java to be able to clearly see the great achievements of their past, and to enjoy and emulate those achievements in all their beauty.¹ This statement brings to mind the so-called restoration debate of the 1920s in which those that followed the line of the first director of the Archeological Service, Nicolaas Johannes Krom, were hesitant towards reconstruction, while Bosch and his adherents more strongly advocated for reconstruction.² But Stutterheim's remark also touches upon the implicit assumption that apparently only a fully reconstructed temple could impress the Javanese visitor.

Despite the fact that official Buddhist-Hindu heritage sites and museums were indeed popular amongst the population during the first half of the twentieth century already, temple ruins, sculptures and ornamented stones, which up until that time

1 William Frederik Stutterheim and Oudheidkundige Dienst Nederlandsch-Indië, *Een Oudheidkundig Jubileum: 1913-1938* (Batavia: Oudheidkundige Dienst Nederlandsch-Indië, 1938), 3.

2 August Johan Bernet Kempers, *Herstel in eigen waarde: Monumentenzorg in Indonesië* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1978), 107-112. In Krom's opinion restoration and reconstruction first and foremost served scientific purposes. Reconstruction should therefore occur preferably on paper. Only in cases where scientific insight demanded, actual reconstruction could take place under the condition that enough original stones were available.

were often hidden from view by tropical forest, had for a far longer time made an impression on the local population, albeit for different reasons.³ Apart from the Dutch archeological activities on Java, the Javanese themselves, especially the elite, were very well aware of the value of their heritage and the knowledge about it. But at the same time, for many, heritage sites and objects also played a role in daily life. Temple remains, statues and stones related to heritage sites, sometimes instilled fear, were considered as places where spirits resided, but were also places of worship and where offerings were done.

As will become clear this often led to practices that from the perspective of heritage preservation, such as it was envisioned by the Archeological Service, were not conducive. Statues were, for instance, for ritualistic reasons sometimes smeared with substances. In some cases, repairs to temples executed by the Archeological Service, were undone by the population out of fear for upsetting the spirits. It is precisely this clash of different conceptions of heritage and the power of its sites and objects that I want to address and which has hitherto been given mainly casual attention.

The history of heritage preservation and policy by the Dutch in Indonesia has been elaborately described, for instance, in the late 1970s by Bernet Kempers, starting from the founding of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen in 1778 up until the late 1970s when heritage policy had in the meanwhile become a responsibility of the modern Indonesian state.⁴ *The Sculpture of Indonesia*, edited by Jan Fontein, R. Soekmono and Edi Sedyawati, is a key publication from the 1990s. Besides being an important overview of the main sculpture from Indonesia between 900 – 1600, this exhibition catalogue has been all the more significant for its emphasis on the relation between sculpture, ornament and architecture.⁵ The ways in which these relate and are significant with regard to restoration comes to the fore in Soekmono's contribution from which it appears how many ideas formulated by the Dutch Archeological Service, still resonated in those of the National Archeological Institute of the Republic Indonesia (Lembaga Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional

3 In 1913 the numbers of visitors to the Prambanan site, of which most belong to the local population, significantly increases with more than sixty percent. Nicolaas Johannes Krom, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Eerste kwartaal 1914" in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië*. Ed. *Oudheidkundig Verslag 1914*, 1 – 8 (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1915), 3. The museum at Modjokerto, for instance, attracted an average of 250 visitors per day and at some feast days even 1200 during August 1915. Frederik David Kan Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Derde kwartaal 1915," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië*. Ed. *Oudheidkundig Verslag 1915*, 97 – 103 (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1916), 101-102.

4 Kempers, *Herstel in eigen waarde*, 38.

5 Jan Fontein, R. Soekmono & Edi Sedyawati, *Het goddelijk gezicht van Indonesië: Meesterwerken der beeldhouwkunst 700-1600*. Tent. Cat. Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam (Zwolle: Waanders, 1992).

Republic Indonesia).⁶ Marijke Klokke's work with regard to Javanese sculpture and architecture has contributed significantly to our understanding of how these relate in the construction of temples, such as, for instance, in her work on the building phases of the Borobudur.⁷ Nandana Chutiwongs discusses the ambivalent relation the local people had with regard to the Borobudur which was sometimes anxiously avoided but also regarded as a place of mysticism and a place where offerings were held.⁸ The tensions between the objectives of the Archeological Service on the one hand, and the interest in heritage of the local people on the other, were also already touched upon occasionally by Bernet Kempers, for instance, in the case of the Joko Dolok statue in Surabaya, to which I will come back later, and, with regard to the need of the monument ordinance, the modern graffiti applied at the reliefs in the cave of Selomangleng.⁹ Recently, Bloembergen & Eickhoff discuss the often ambivalent, complex and changing power relations surrounding heritage sites in Indonesia in the past two centuries. They show how heritage sites have been used by political rulers and colonizers to legitimize power often based on idealized histories, supported by knowledge provided by official experts, by means of which meaning and use of these sites were regulated and made politically productive, often opposing the interests the local population has in these sites.¹⁰

By means of a close scrutiny of the Archeological Surveys published by the Archeological Service, between 1913 and 1942, I have been looking at cases that were sometimes merely casually addressed from which such a local interest came to the fore. I will identify roughly seven different kinds of responses towards heritage sites and objects that can be distilled from what was reported in the Archeological Survey. I will then highlight three cases, which are exemplary of three of the above-mentioned responses, which have also been discussed more elaborately in the literature. Finally, I want to look at how these responses can be explained by considering these three case-studies against the background of the complex spiritual belief system of the Javanese, as has been elaborately described by Clifford Geertz.

6 R. Soekmono, "Indonesische architectuur van de klassieke periode," in Jan Fontein, R. Soekmono & Edi Sedyawati, 67 – 96, *Het goddelijk gezicht van Indonesië: Meesterwerken der beeldhouwkunst 700-1600*. Tent. Cat. Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam (Zwolle: Waanders, 1992), 88-94.

7 Marijke Klokke, "Art historical evidence for the building phases of the Borobudur," in *Materializing Southeast Asia's Past: papers from the 12th International Conference of the European Association of Southeast Asian Archaeologists*, vol. 2 (Singapore: NUS, 2013), 10 – 26.

8 Nandana Chutiwongs, "De puzzelstukjes van de Borobudur opnieuw bekeken," in *Indonesia: De ontdekking van het verleden*. 40 – 48, *Tent. Cat. Museum nasional Jakarta & De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam*, eds., Sri Hardiati, Endang & Pieter ter Keurs (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 40, 44, 48.

9 *Ibid.*, 36, 226.

10 Marieke Bloembergen & Martijn Eijckhof *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia: A Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 268.

Dealing with heritage in practice

The population of Java had a complex relationship with the cultural heritage of the island. As such, different kinds of responses towards objects can be distinguished as well as different kinds of daily practice in relation with heritage objects and sites: worship and praise, maintaining the spiritual balance, destruction, care and preservation, indifference and neglect, reuse of materials and meaning, and finally, looting for personal or commercial interest.

Statues, objects and sites were still worshipped even though most of them date from the Buddhist-Hindu period. Regardless that the population of Java in the twentieth century was mainly Muslim, Buddhist and Hindu traditions, as well as animist beliefs and rituals, still resonated in the way objects and sites were worshipped.¹¹ In practice that meant that objects, sites and statues were sometimes ritually smeared with substances and that meals were offered to them. The belief that objects, sites and nature are inhabited by spirits is very strong in Java and therefore, besides worship and offering, it was also important not to upset the world of spirits. In practice this sometimes meant that ancient temples inhabited by spirits should be left untouched not to upset them. From time to time this clashed with the objectives of the Archeological Service. Reconstruction to, or preserving of a supposed 'original' state of a temple, did not seem to matter to the local population as much as it did to the Archeological Service. What comes to the fore from described cases is that to the local population, it was apparently much more important to preserve the temple ruin as it was once encountered both by the population as well as by the spirits residing in it. Therefore, sometimes repairs done by the Archeological Service, were undone by the nearby population, especially when they experienced the spirits done harm to the population after such a so-called repair, which was seen as a disturbance of the spirits.

Besides protecting sites from change, to not upset (a) spirit(s), in other cases objects were deliberately destroyed, for reasons they would have been inhabited by an evil and upset spirit exactly. Such a bad influence could come to the fore, again when diseases broke out or a crop failed, for instance, whenever one was too close to (the influence of) the inhabited object. This was the case with a statue group found near Singosari that would have been smashed to pieces for such reasons and which I will discuss more elaborately later.¹²

However, there are many instances in which the population actively participated with the Archeological Service, for instance, by showing the archeologists where

11 Kromodjojo Adinegoro, "Bijlage E," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1924*, 72 – 80 (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1925), 72 – 80.

12 P.R. Van Stein Callenfels, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het eerste en tweede kwartaal 1928," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1928*, 3 – 35 (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1929), 27.

ancient remains could be found. Most importantly, some of the members of the Javanese elite, who in the colonial hierarchy were often appointed as regents, were most actively involved in heritage preservation but were also responsible for establishing the historical links between the former Buddhist and Hindu empires, with Majapahit as its culmination, and contemporary Java. Something which would become important for the later nationalist movement for different reasons.¹³ Raden Kromodjo Adinegoro, regent of Modjokerto, was for instance involved in the research on the ancient capital of the Majapahit empire in Eastern Java.¹⁴ Furthermore, the local museum in Modjokerto, to which the regent had dedicated much attention, was very popular amongst the population for which the regent was praised by the Archeological Service.¹⁵ But there were also cases in which the Archeological Service was less praiseworthy of the Javanese interference with cultural heritage. For instance, in the case of the Magelang collections in which, due to alleged indifference of both the municipality and the caretakers, statues and objects were not carefully preserved and protected.¹⁶ The Archeological Service sometimes also complained about so-called well-intended but incompetent 'restoration'.¹⁷

Regardless the intellectual and spiritual interest of the Javanese population and elite, heritage objects and sites were sometimes also demolished for strikingly practical reasons, for instance, because temple remains were seen as resources for cheap building material. Moreover, a practice that to the great dismay of the Archeological Service, took place on a large scale by the domestic government and Dutch industrials, who were responsible for using temple stones in new constructions such as railway bridges, and for grinding temple bricks to be re-used in cement. Such practices often even took place in consultation with the population.¹⁸

Finally, one of the major problems was the looting of objects by, for instance, members of the local population, tourists, the Dutch, Chinese traders, etcetera. In some cases this happened because looters illegally collected objects themselves but

13 See for instance Bloembergen & Eickhoff, *The politics of heritage in Indonesia*, 129-163.

14 Nicolaas Johannes Krom, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Vierde kwartaal 1914," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1914, 197 – 210* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1915), 203, 206.

15 Nicolaas Johannes Krom, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Tweede kwartaal 1915," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1915, 97 – 103* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1916), 101.

16 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Derde kwartaal 1916," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1916, 71 – 80* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1917), 88.

17 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Derde en vierde kwartaal 1925," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1925, 69 – 104*, (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1926), 93.

18 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Vierde kwartaal 1920," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1915, 111 – 118* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1921), 116.

most of the time it was about selling the objects. To prevent the illegal removing and trading of heritage objects, the monument ordinance came into effect in 1931.¹⁹ So, even though in addition to illegal trade, the Dutch authorities had in the past been responsible for the 'legal' disappearance of objects abroad, there was certainly a genuine concern in the period between 1913 and 1942, at least from the side of the Archeological Service, regarding the preservation and protection of cultural heritage for the Indonesian archipelago.

Worship and offering

As already anticipated above, the way the local people of Java worshipped statues often contradicted the principles of heritage conservation of the Archeological Service. In 1915 the Archeological Survey reports that the giant statue Joko Dolok in Surabaya has been smeared with a tar-like substance to create a beard and a moustache in the face. Moreover, the report states that the hair would have been painted black, the ears and nose were damaged and the closed eyes were provided with large pupils, which would have taken away the statue's musing appearance.²⁰ The Surveys do not report about possible reasons why these changes in the facial appearance of Joko Dolok were applied. Probably, archeologists were more concerned with how to prevent such actions than to clarify them. In response to these events, a decision was made the following year, to place a fence around the site to prevent the statue from further damage. However, attempts to remove the substance had remained unsuccessful.²¹

This Joko Dolok statue, which according to Natasha Ann Reichle 'represents a man in the garb of a monk, in the *mudrā* of Aksobhya', dates from 1289 (Western era) and would have been a portrait statue of King Krtanagara, who as former king of Singosari would have been the founder of Surabaya (Fig. 1).²² According to Reichle it would represent the king in the state of being unified with Aksobhya, and can therefore be regarded as a representation of the king's apotheosis during his lifetime. Because members of the royalty would normally unite with their deity after death

19 Willem Frederik Stutterheim, *Een Oudheidkundige Dienst Nederlandsch-Indië. Een Oudheidkundig Jubileum: 1913-1938* (Batavia: Oudheidkundige Dienst Nederlandsch-Indië, 1936), 11-12.

20 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Vierde kwartaal 1915," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1915, 137 – 147* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1916), 140-141.

21 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Eerste kwartaal 1916," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1916, 1 – 11* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1917), 2.

22 Natasha Ann Reichle, "Joko Dolok and the Politics of Royal Asceticism," in *Violence and Serenity: Late Buddhist sculpture from Indonesia, ed.*, Natasha Ann Reichle, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2007), 23-24, 47.

only, this representation would as such be unique, at least on Java.²³ Joko Dolok (or sometimes spelled as Joko Dolog or Djoko Dolog) means ‘fat boy’, which makes sense seeing the statue. However, Broeshart et al., explained the name as probably resulting from a subtle change in the pronunciation of an original name that would have been Djogo Dolok, which according to Broeshart et al., means “guardian of trees”.²⁴ The reference to King Krtanagara and the guardian of trees may thus explain two possible reasons for why this statue is still worshipped.

Joko Dolok does not originate in Surabaya. Bloembergen & Eickhoff explain how in 1817 the statue was moved from its original site to the square in front of the residency of Surabaya on the orders of the then new Dutch resident A.M.T. de Salis (1786-1834).²⁵ Attempts of the Royal Batavian Society to obtain the statue for the museum failed after a strong plea from the resident of Surabaya, van Deventer, who cited from a letter by the regent of Surabaya and points out the importance of the statue for the population of Surabaya who after all would have been robbed of their object of veneration in the case the statue would move to the museum. This would even cause great suffering and consternation.²⁶

Apparently, the statue was visited to make offerings in response to fortune and cure of disease in the form of burning incense, sprinkling flowers and smearing the statue with *boreh*, an ointment based on turmeric used for ritual and healing purposes.²⁷ Sometimes, *boreh* hides parts of the monuments much to the dismay of the Archeological Service. The inscription at the base of Joko Dolok is readable and ready for examination only after the remains of *boreh* have been removed.²⁸ Besides *boreh*, flowers and incense, also coins and food were offered as well as necklaces and textiles with which Joko Dolok was adorned.²⁹ However, these practices do not yet explain the changes that were made to the face with the tar-like substance. Bosch

23 Reichle, ‘Joko Dolok and the Politics of Royal Asceticism’, 47. Aksobhya is one of the five Cosmic Buddhas within tantric Buddhism and also worshipped as a distinct deity. Paul Williams, & Anthony Tribe, *Buddhist thought: A complete introduction to the Indian tradition* (London; New York: Routledge, 2002), 211 – 214.

24 A.C. Broeshart, J.R. van Dissen, R.G. Gill & J.P. Zeydner, *Soerabaja: Beeld van een stad* (Purmerend: Asia Maior, 1997), 12.

25 Bloembergen & Eickhoff, *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia*, 108 – 110. Today archeologists assume that the original site of the statue was the cemetery Lemah Tulis in Trowulan. See *Ibid.*, 110 note 38.

26 Bloembergen & Eickhoff, *The Politics of Heritage in Indonesia*, 111.

27 J. Knebel, “Beschrijving der Hindoe-oudheden in de afdeling Soerabaja,” in *Rapporten van de Commissie in Nederlandsch-Indië voor oudheidkundig onderzoek op Java en Madoera 1907* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1909), 212-215. About *boreh* see Van Veen & Van der Sijs, *Etymologisch woordenboek*.

28 N.J. Krom, “Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Tweede kwartaal 1913,” in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1913* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1914), 33.

29 Kempers, *Herstel in eigen waarde*, 36.



Figure 6.1: *Joko Dolog*, 1289, Surabaya, (Photo: Afrinaldi Zulhen, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/deed.en>)

referred to the beard and moustache as ‘traditional’ and regretted the fact that many Buddha heads were, in his words, ‘mocked’ by such acts, implying this was a more common phenomenon.³⁰ Moreover, despite the fact that almost everything was photographed by the Archeological Service, these kind of ‘damages’ were hardly visually documented. Unfortunately, it is therefore difficult to reconstruct how the adjustments to *Joko Dolog* may have looked like, because the tar-like substance has not been photographed either, unlike the offerings mentioned above of which many of the photographs of the statue actually testify.³¹

More recent photographs from the statue, such as the one in Bernet Kemper’s book from 1978, seem to indicate that the tar-like substance has either been eventually removed or somehow worn off. The Archeological Surveys of the years following 1916 do not report about the case anymore and therefore do not give definitive answers with regard to the act. It also remains unclear whether a fence

30 Bosch, “Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Vierde kwartaal 1915,” 140-141. At least there is one more report of a case in which temple terraces and the main temple were smeared with a tar-like substance at Candi Sukuh. See Van Stein Callenfels, “Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Eerste en tweede kwartaal 1928,” 13.

31 *Ibid.*, 35, figure 17.

was eventually placed or not. In any case, smearing the statue with tar seems not to have occurred anymore later but worship and offerings at Joko Dolok continued.³² This raises the question whether the application of the tar-like substance was indeed a (single) case of ‘mockery’ as Bosch called it, or, if the adjustment to the facial appearance of Joko Dolok should somehow be explained from the connection of the statue to either King Krtanagara or the guardian of trees.

Maintaining the spiritual balance

It should be clear from the previous example that the connection of heritage sites and objects to Java’s past or to the spirits, maintains a common relationship with these sites and objects in the form of offerings which permits at least the application of ointments and adornments to objects. In other cases, people were extremely cautious with adjustments to heritage sites, particularly when these adjustments had no ritual significance, or were not ritually approved.

Still, in the course of time adjustments to temples were made, inspired by ritual purposes, sometimes informed by great enthusiasm for antiquities, but often also with lack of art historical knowledge. The Archeological Service regularly had to undo such changes and restore temples again according to their most recent insights. Such was also the case at Candi Tegowangi in the Kediri area where an underground room was described already by Thomas Stamford Raffles in 1817, and which would not have been constructed when the temple was built but must have been a later addition (Fig. 2). This room appeared to be connected to a depression outside at the south side of a temple which was constructed with ornamented stones but showed no relationship with the original temple wall. The hole applied in the fundamental brick wall between this depression and the room, caused subsidence of the original temple wall on top, and therefore had to be closed. When archeologist and constructional engineer P.J. Perquin visited the site a couple of days after closing the hole he found that the wall was opened again. The local *djoeroekoentji* (key keeper) declared that after the closing of the hole, sixteen people from the nearby *desa* had suffered from *sakit gila* (a state of madness) and four had died. According to the *djoeroekoentji*, in their state, the sixteen wanted to crawl through the wall into the temple and were surprised to find the entrance sealed off, to what they referred to as their ‘home’, thus ‘enough reason to re-open the hole’.³³

32 For instance, in the early 1940s as the threat of war increased, many heritage sites were protected against possible air strikes and during this campaign the Joko Dolok was covered with sand bags. At the request of the population, a space was kept open near the hands of the statue, to ensure the offerings could continue. *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Indonesie, Oudheidkundig Verslag 1941 – Maart 1942* (Bandung: A.C. Nix & Co., 1949), 37.

33 P.J. Perquin, “Verslag uitgebracht naar aanleiding van de bezoeken aan tempels in Midden-Java,” in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1917* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1918), 105-106.

Although Perquin managed to close the hole again, a year later Van Stein Callenfels had to conclude that the wall had been opened yet again. This time the reason had to do with the *djoeroekoentji* himself. After some investigation Van Stein Callenfels found out that the *djoeroekoentji* apparently felt that too little notion was taken of him during the time of the excavation of the site. This was probably a matter of honor causing the *djoeroekoentji* to successively incite the local people and to manipulate their sensitivity to local belief systems to suggest that the closing of the hole had been responsible for a local recent outbreak of the plague. After some effort, the regent of Kediri successively convinced the population that such was nonsense. In November 1916, the hole could finally be closed again by Van Coolwijk, but these kinds of issues at heritage sites were reason for the Archeological Service to ensure that sites would be controlled on a more regular basis.³⁴

The staff of the Archeological Service was well aware of the spiritual importance of heritage sites. In 1916, a stone with inscriptions in ancient Kediri script was found in the region of Blitar. In the Archeological Survey of that year, it is reported that these inscriptions were hard to read because the stone was partly buried in the soil and therefore had to be excavated. Because of the local people's faith this case had to be handled very carefully and a *slametan* (a ritual meal) had to be performed first, for which according to the survey Van Stein Callenfels would not have found the time yet.³⁵ A year later Perquin encounters a problem at a temple in Gedong Sanga where the building has been torn apart in such a state that a shoring of the temple walls is no longer possible. According to Perquin, the entrance to the small temple should be closed for the meantime and the whole building filled with soil until the construction can be deconstructed and successively rebuilt. Van Stein Callenfels informed Perquin that this plan was not feasible as the local people would in that case lose their object of veneration. Perquin states that he understood such objections and deeply respected the feelings of the local people. He continues by explaining how he himself had frequently experienced, for instance at Oud-Bantam and at diverse Hindu-monuments, how, according to the population, all the ancient graves and trees

34 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Vierde kwartaal 1916," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1916* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1917), 100.

35 F.D.K. Bosch, "Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Tweede kwartaal 1916," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1916* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1917), 47. A *slametan* is a communal ritual meal in which neighbours, family members and other relatives participate. Each participant in the *slametan* has an equal ritual significance. The purpose of a *slametan* is to maintain, promote or restore order, i.e., the harmonious order that is a precondition for receiving the blessings of the Gods, the spirits and ancestors. See Niels Mulder, *Mysticism in Java: Ideology in Indonesia* (Yogyakarta: Kanisius, 2005), 89. See also Clifford Geertz, *The religion of Java* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1960), 11 – 15.

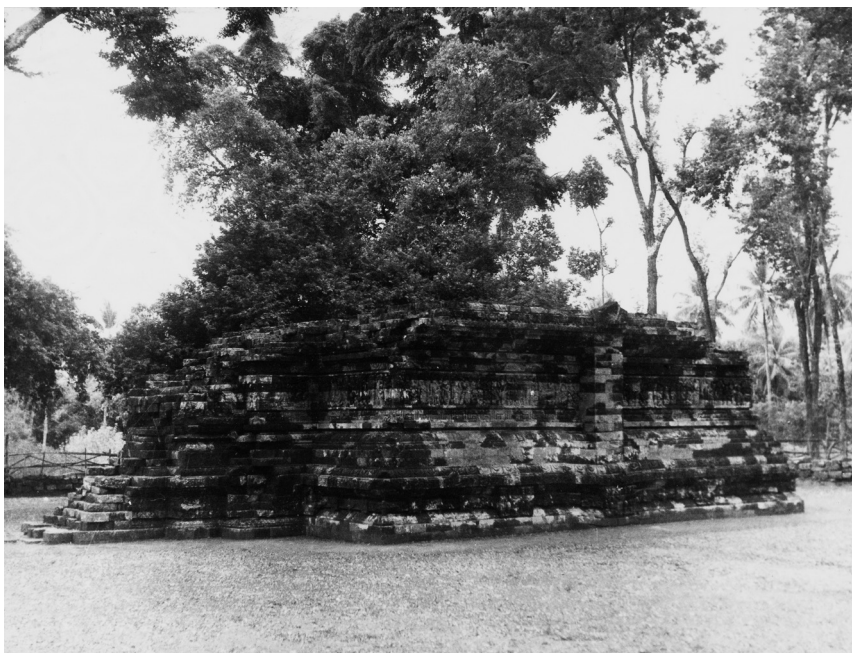


Figure 6.2: *Candi Tegowangi*, c. 1400, andesite, East Java, Kediri district. Photo: OD 18032.

are possessed by spirits. Still, Perquin is confident that one day they will be able to execute the necessary measurements.³⁶

Fear and iconoclasm

As became clear in the second case-study, for the Javanese who predominantly believed everything was inhabited by spirits, negative forces could emanate from both natural as well as manmade objects. Except from spiritual orders that should not be disturbed and restored, even though disruption had occurred anyway, in some cases objects and images that were attributed with negative force were deliberately destroyed. In 1927, a shattered statue fragment was found near Ardimulyo that was believed to have been smashed to pieces by human force. An investigation into the cause was set up and people from the nearby village informed the Archeological Service that the statue had indeed been smashed with a sledgehammer by the

36 P.J. Perquin, "Verslag uitgebracht naar aanleiding van de bezoeken aan tempels in Midden-Java," in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1917* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1918), 26.

previous land owner (Fig. 6.3).³⁷ The reason for destruction lay in the experience of the owner who claimed that everyone who came too close to the statue was faced with fatal consequences such as, for instance, death and disease. Perquin also assumed that for the reason of fear the fragments were left behind and not removed from the land. More fragments were found and brought to the Perquin's yard at Malang where they were further investigated and ordered. The fragments appeared to have been part of a statue group of 1.41 m. wide and 1.23 high, containing a seated goddess with a glory, a Ganesha to her left and a small man to her right, with an inscription at the back of the group (Fig. 6.4). No fragments of the face of the goddess were found but she was recognized as a goddess from the glory with leaking flames behind where the head was. More important for the identification were the skulls recognizable in what would have been part of the headgear and those that form the necklace of the goddess. Skulls are also recognizable in the necklace of the little man (Bhairava) in the statue group. This man is naked, has long curly hair and tusks. He is seated on a cushion covered with skulls and skulls are also visible in his headgear. Ganesha too stands on a cushion executed with a band of skulls. The association with death



Figure 6.3: *Fragments of a Camunda statue with inscriptions in Kawi and Nagari script, dated 1292 AD, Photo: 1927, OD-8903.*

37 Jan Fontein, "Piercing together the fragments of the past," *Aziatische kunst* 26, 4, (1996), 13.

is immanent here, also, because the goddess is seated on top of what is the corpse of a so-called half deity. Perquin therefore assumed that the goddess statue represents a Durga, even though in the traditional representation of Durga, the goddess stands on a bull. Bosch agreed with Perquin but argues this statue does not represent a Hinduist Durga but a Buddhist type, the so-called Guhyecwari, a lady of mysteries. According to Bosch, the only of this type outside Nepal. Within the attributes held in the eight arms of the goddess Bosch identified a human head in her left second hand from below. In her lowest left arm, she holds a skull which according to Bosch would have been the pendant of the attribute of a sacrificial knife that would have been in her right lower arm but was broken off.³⁸

The exact identification remained problematic because of the damage done to the statue. Stutterheim was at least not convinced that the goddess represents a Guhyecwari, as the statue would have lacked some of the Buddhist characteristics of that type exactly. For the time being Stutterheim regarded the statue as a tantric Durga of some kind of special type from the Majapahit era that needed to be further identified.³⁹ Not much later, on the basis of another study of the inscription,

38 Van Stein Callenfels, 'Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Eerste en tweede kwartaal 1928', 27-32. A more elaborate description of the attributes and iconography of the statue group is provided here. The meaning of Guhyecwari, the Buddhist type of Durga is also further explained. The inscriptions at the back of the statue are in Kawi and Nagari script and were translated and interpreted by Dr. R. Goris. Ibid., 32. The captions of the photographs that were made of the fragments, which are currently part of the KITLV photo-collection, refer to the statue as a Camunda, which is one of the names given to Kali, an appearance also associated with Durga. See for instance: <http://hdl.handle.net/1887.1/item:8312>, consulted 30 January 2022. However, none of the original descriptions of the photographs, as they were inventoried in the Archeological Survey in 1928, mentioned the statue or parts of it as such but they were all described as fragments of a Durga statue. See listing in the inventory of the numbers 8897 to 8906. 'Lijst der fotografische opnamen over het eerste en tweede kwartaal 1928', in: *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1928* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1929) 41-42. According to Jessy Blom, the name Camunda would have been read in the inscription by Stutterheim. Jessy Blom, *The antiquities of Singasari* (Leiden: Burgersdijk & Niermans – Templum Salomonis, 1939), 108. The collection of the National Museum of Ethnology in Leiden contains two separate statues of a Bhairava and a Ganesha (Respective inventory numbers: RV 1403-1680; RV 1403-1681) found in the sanctuary raised by King Krtanagara at Singosari, whose iconography is similar to those of the Camundi group found at Ardumulyo. About the Bhairava see Fontein, *Het goddelijk gezicht van Indonesie*, 162. See also Edi Sedyawati, "Beeldhouwkunst uit de Singosari periode," in *Indonesia: De ontdekking van het verleden*, eds., Sri Hardiati, Endang & Pieter ter Keurs, Tent. Cat. Museum National Jakarta & De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam (Amsterdam: KIT Publishers, 2005), 38 – 39.

39 W.F. Stutterheim, "Oudheidkundige aantekeningen," *Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde van Nederlandsch-Indië* 92, 2 (1934), 184. Stutterheim here further mentions that also the date inscribed (1252 Caka, which is 1332 AD in the Western calendar) does not point to a possible Buddhist type.



Figure 6.4: A badly damaged statue of an eight-armed Guhyecwari, dated 1292 AD, Photo: 1928, OD-9024.

Stutterheim was able to identify the goddess of the group as Camunda, the demonic appearance of Durga.⁴⁰

In the publication on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Archeological Service the statue group appears again but is now referred to by Stutterheim as a Parwati. However, by close examination of the photograph of the reconstructed statue, it can be determined that it corresponds to the descriptions earlier made by Bosch and Perquin. The caption with the photograph also mentions that the inscription dating back to 1332 AD, indicated that the statue would have commemorated a queen from the early Majapahit Empire.⁴¹ It was only until some

40 Ibid., 210. French epigraph Louis-Charles Damais later commented on Stutterheim's findings and responded that one should rather read the spelling form Camundi in the inscriptions of the statue, but still confirmed the statue to be a demonic appearance of Durga. See also Damais, Damais, Louis-Charles, "VI. Études javanaises : II. Le nom de la déité tantrique de 1214 Śaka," in *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 50, 2, (1962), 313-317.

41 Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië, 'Een oudheidkundig jubileum 1913-1938', n.p. See also Stutterheim, "Oudheidkundige aantekeningen," 184. Stutterheim may have confused two statue groups that were found near Singosari which both featured representations of Bhairava. One is indeed a Parvati statue with a Bhairava as one of her acolytes, the other the Camundi statue discussed here. See Fontein, *Het goddelijk gezicht van Indonesië*, 162.

years later that Louis-Charles Damais studied the inscription and came to a different date, namely one that corresponds to 1292 AD.⁴² This date fits very well with other tantric, or demonic depictions of the period, such as, for instance, the famous Ganesha of Singosari. It is also in this period, after Krtanagara's death, when builders must have stopped building the main Singosari temple, which was never finished. There is a bronze statue with the same date in the Museum Volkenkunde in Leiden, which is dedicated to Krtanagara.⁴³

From spiritual balance to social order

Despite the extensive elaborations on the possible identification of the statue group, there is far little interest amongst the Dutch archeologists, at least according to the Archeological Survey, with regard to the act of destruction itself. From Bosch' early report it appears that the former landowner experienced unfortune to those who came too near to the statue and it was also mentioned that after destruction, the fragments were left at the site and not removed out of fear. This is remarkable to say the least and raises the question whether according to the belief of the landowner the act of destruction itself would then not have unfortunate consequences. After all, the fact that the fragments were left undisturbed out of fear, suggest that with the destruction of the image, its agency was apparently not, or at least not fully, destroyed. This makes the destruction also a bit curious. Clues may be found in some of the iconographical elements of the statue group. Regardless of whether the destroyer was (still) fully aware of the statue's original iconological meaning, it can be assumed that the disasters that were experienced could have been related easily to the many skulls represented in the statue group. The man did not need to be an expert on ancient Buddhist-Hindu art, to infer that this statue group is apparently about death.

The case above has been connected by Natasha Reichle to other practices of deliberate destructions of statues of which there were more accounts, such as those of the Batak on Sumatra. She refers to P.H. Pott who drew from reports by Bosch from 1930 about the destruction of a Heruka image; a fearsome god who was previously honored, possibly because of its connections to cannibalism in Batak culture, but who, according to P.H. Pott, was later collectively carefully smashed to pieces out of fear for the god. According to Bosch, the latter should also be seen as an act of liberation by a now peaceful culture from its gruesome past.⁴⁴ In short, it appears

42 Louis-Charles Damais, "VI. Études javanaises : II. Le nom de la déité tantrique de 1214 Śaka," in *Bulletin de l'Ecole française d'Extrême-Orient* 50, 2, (1962), 415.

43 Collectie Wereldculturen, "Amoghapasha en zijn helpers," Accessed May 13, 2022. <https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/747292>.

44 Natasha Ann Reichle, *Violence and Serenity: Late Buddhist sculpture from Indonesia*, 161.

that in the destruction of statues both elements of fear, as well as ritualized forms of liberation, and perhaps purification, play a role.

All these cases show the importance for the local population in their belief in the spiritual world. This is a reason to sacrifice to statues, but also, as I discussed, a reason to undo certain repairs to temples done by archeologists, when according to the population such interventions would have disturbed the spiritual balance for which they saw evidence in occurrences such as sudden illness or death.

The spirit world of Java is complex and there are many kinds of spirits. Geertz described five main categories: *memedis*, *lelembuts*, *tujuls*, *demits* and *danjangs*.⁴⁵ Two categories are of typical interest in relation to the agency attributed to temple ruins and objects of art. Spirits known as *lelembuts* appear to be particularly harmful as they have the power to enter one's body and possess someone. They can for instance cause illness, madness or even death. Only a Javanese *dukun* can liberate someone from a *lelembut*; a Western (trained) doctor cannot do anything about this. *Lelembuts* can enter one's body when the place where they reside is disturbed but they come in different forms and different grades of possession and harm. Geertz mentions one case of a man acting strange after returning from a Hindu temple where a spirit would have entered him, albeit of a sort of which the possession does not take too long and is not too severe.⁴⁶ This may therefore explain the unrest caused around Candi Tegowangi when sixteen villagers would have gone mad after interventions at the temple site by the Archeological Service.

Another category of spirits of interest for the case are *demits* which are related to the founding myth of Java and are connected to holy places such as Hindu temples. Geertz describes the example of a Ganesha statue in the heart of the town of Modjokuto, which would have been occupied by a *demit*. According to local accounts, the statue would have returned by itself after it was taken to another town fifteen miles away. Even though *demits* would according to Geertz never harm people but rather guide and protect them, he does mention that a low rank Dutch servant would have died after kicking the Ganesha statue which he objected because he regarded it as pagan. Within a year his family would have died too.⁴⁷ Geertz also describes *danjangs*, which would merely be another name for *demits*. Some *danjangs* are associated with historical figures such as the founders of a city or the first to have cleared a certain piece of land. According to Geertz each village has at least one *danjang*, obviously the founder of the village whose descendants sometimes claim has still power over who shall rule the village. Sometimes, a *danjang* can also be a

45 Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java*, 24. These names are often used interchangeably.

46 *Ibid.*, 19-21.

47 *Ibid.*, 24.

protector who resides in a natural phenomenon or thing such as a tree, who guarded the surroundings before the arrival of humans.⁴⁸

Referring back to the case of the Joko Dolok statue in Surabaya, whether we deal here with a representation of King Krtanagara or a guardian of trees, the rituals surrounding the statue might thus be explainable from the complex belief system within which after all in return for their pleas, the community must offer *slametans* to the spirits.⁴⁹ According to Geertz, this whole belief system should be seen as a symbolic translation of the social order which in turn represents the victory of culture over human and non-human nature, whereby in the course of time with the cultivation of Java, the spirits would have retreated to the remaining natural sites such as volcanoes and pieces of tropical forest. Therefore, it may not be surprising that the Buddhist and Hindu temple ruins were also regarded as places where the spirits resided, since these sites were after all for a long time in a dilapidated state and overgrown by vegetation. The offering in the form of a *slametan* must be seen as a confirmation of this cultural order and is needed especially when nonhuman disorder, represented by the spirits, threaten it.⁵⁰

Discussion

What can be concluded from the example of Candi Tegowangi, however, is that even though the Archeological Service with all good intentions aimed at restoring ancient temples to their supposed 'original' state, in the eyes of many Javanese their acts must regularly have been seen rather as a disturbance of the order, one that cannot simply take place and thus must have required a *slametan*. The destruction of the Camundi statue groups presents a more complex case. It could possibly have occurred as an act of purification by means of destruction but as discussed above, since the remains were left behind, probably out of fear, the destroyer must somehow have realized to not have completely destroyed the agency of the statue. Moreover, this case touches on two main aspects for further research. As described above, one of them concerns a thorough understanding of the belief system on Java as to why and how local perspectives on heritage clashed with those of the then official Dutch policy guarded by the Archeological Service. The other concerns questions on why some objects apparently evoked stronger emotions than others and were therefore attributed with more agency than others. This requires a consideration of belief system in relation to the formal and stylistic properties of objects and is therefore also an art historical concern. In the case of the Camundi statue it might appear obvious to regard the skulls of Camundi, Bhairava and Ganesha as one clear visual property that can be interpreted by a viewer as exercising an evil agency of some sort.

48 Ibid., 26 – 27.

49 Ibid., 26.

50 Ibid., 28 – 29.

But even without such obvious visual properties as skulls, objects which appear as specially shaped can be assigned certain powers and special status. The belief that anything can be inhabited by spirits also blurs the distinction between manmade and natural and therefore between intentional and coincidental with regard to the agency that can be attributed to an object. In 1917 Van Stein Callenfels already mentioned that many trips were undertaken on the instructions of the local population to supposed antiquities, which in the end only appeared as apparently holy but were in fact no more than curiously shaped river stones.⁵¹

51 F.D.K. Bosch, “Oudheidkundig Verslag over het Derde kwartaal 1917,” in *Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië. Ed. Oudheidkundig Verslag 1917* (Batavia: Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, 1918), 72.