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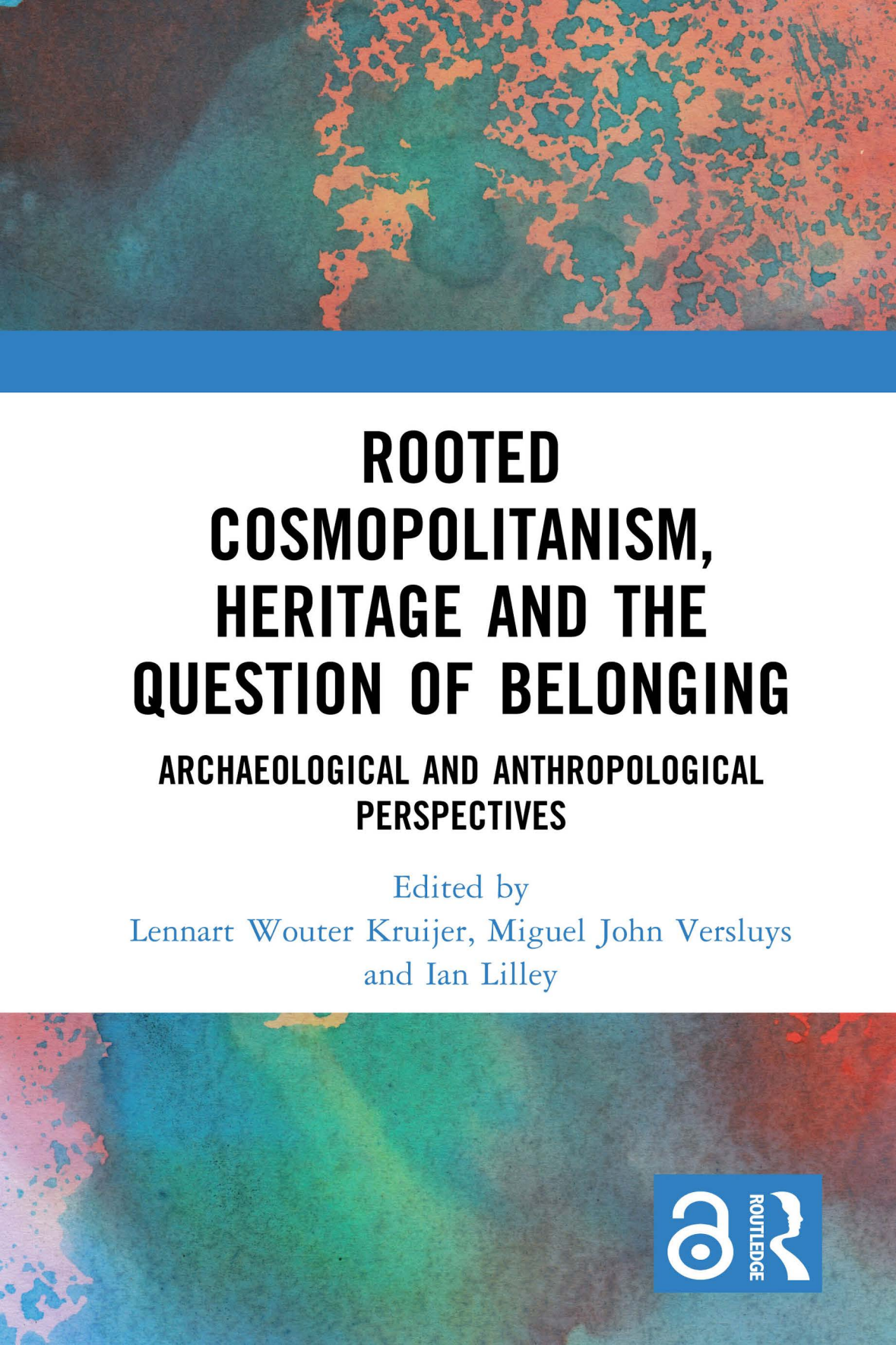
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ROOTED COSMOPOLITANISM, HERITAGE AND THE QUESTION OF BELONGING

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ANTHROPOLOGICAL
PERSPECTIVES**

Edited by

Lennart Wouter Kruijer, Miguel John Versluys
and Ian Lilley



Rooted Cosmopolitanism, Heritage and the Question of Belonging

This book explores the analytical and practical value of the notion of “rooted cosmopolitanism” for the field of cultural heritage.

Many concepts of present-day heritage discourses—such as World Heritage, local heritage practices, or indigenous heritage—tend to elide the complex interplay between the local and the global—entanglements that are investigated as “glocalisation” in Globalisation Studies. However, no human group ever creates more than a part of its heritage by itself. This book explores an exciting new alternative in scholarly (critical) heritage discourse, the notion of rooted cosmopolitanism, a way of making manifestations of globalised phenomena comprehensible and relevant at local levels. It develops a critical perspective on heritage and heritage practices, bringing together a highly varied yet conceptually focused set of stimulating contributions by senior and emerging scholars working on the heritage of localities across the globe. A contextualising introduction is followed by three strongly theoretical and methodological chapters which complement the second part of the book, six concrete, empirical chapters written in “response” to the more theoretical chapters. Two final reflective conclusions bring together these different levels of analysis.

This book will appeal primarily to archaeologists, anthropologists, heritage professionals, and museum curators who are ready to be confronted with innovative and exciting new approaches to the complexities of cultural heritage in a globalising world.

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“An important intervention in both archaeology and heritage studies, the contributors of this volume bring a global perspective to the classic theme of cosmopolitanism. Drawing from different disciplines and international case studies, this book makes a significant contribution beyond method and theory and offers new insights on globalisation, nationalism, religion, and the ethics of belonging.”

Lynn Meskell, *Professor of Anthropology,
University of Pennsylvania & AD White Professor-at-Large,
Cornell University*

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11 Beyond the local and the global

Erik de Maaker

What heritage, whose heritage?

Let me approach the main theme of this volume through one of the many case studies presented in its chapters. At the entrance of Adiyaman University (south-central Turkey), an extensive modern complex dedicated to scientific research and teaching, are two massive stone copies of enormous elaborately sculptured stone heads, the originals of which can be found at the nearby ruins of Nemrut Dağı (Lennart Wouter Kruijer and Miguel John Versluys, this volume). Nemrut Dağı is a ‘tomb-sanctuary’. It was probably built around 50 BCE, as a place of worship within the late Hellenistic kingdom of Commagene. Displaying “styles, iconographies and religious concepts” deriving from the “Greek and Hellenistic Mediterranean, Armenia, the Persian world and Rome”, Nemrut Dağı bears witness to a pre-Islamic history of the region. On the basis of its ‘Greek’ characteristics, scholars have often understood Nemrut Dağı as part of a wave of ‘Hellenisation’ that would have changed the Near East from ‘Oriental’ into ‘Greek’. Similarly, and in contradiction, the ruins also figure in competing academic narratives that argue for the indigenous, Anatolian character of the site. The ancient origins of the impressive and elaborate statues attract global tourism, providing the site with a further role in defining the ancient and mixed cultural roots of the region. Although the ruins nowadays lack a formal religious function, they continue to inspire contemporary mysticism, as is evident from their recent emergence in a well-received Netflix series (notably in Turkey) foregrounding the sanctuary’s ancient past. Last, given its pre-Islamic origins, to some, Nemrut Dağı represents nothing less than idolatry. Between the copies of the statues at the driveway of the university, their ancient roots, the appeal of the site to global tourism, and its associations with contemporary mysticism, what does Nemrut Dağı stand for today? How are its distinct significances and interpretations premised on the particular locality, while at the same time embedded in notions that operate at a much higher level of abstraction?

UNESCO has recognised Nemrut Dağı as a World Heritage site. If landscapes, ruins, buildings, and practices become formally designated as heritage, that serves to indicate that as manifestations of a past, they should be sustained in the present, to be kept for the future (Harrison 2010, 5). Sites, objects and events designated as UNESCO World Heritage of outstanding universal value have to explicitly meet

a large number of criteria. But even with rigorous procedures in place, the appreciation which people have for what is acknowledged as heritage is likely to vary. What may be of great value to some, in a variety of different and differing ways, may, for others, not hold much importance at all. What is heritage that should be safeguarded for the future is necessarily and unavoidably a subjective assessment, which varies across societal categories if not from person to person.

The authors of this volume proceed from the premise that what is heritage, what is identified as valuable, and to be kept, is never a given. They explore how places, objects, and events are valued, as heritage or in myriad other ways. Analysing how people with different backgrounds engage in meaning-making processes can shed light on how they position themselves in a cultural and historical sense. Consequently, the explorations undertaken in this volume towards heritage 'in situ' produce valuable insights in terms of identity and historicity. People's engagement with what to some is heritage (but not necessarily to others) helps to reveal how they locate themselves in terms of loyalties and connectedness, what they draw inspiration from, and hence how they include themselves in certain societal categories and exclude themselves from others.

Rooting cosmopolitanism

If places, objects and events do not carry intrinsic significances, whether these are considered as heritage or not, by what processes do they obtain these? How do phenomena that are at least in their physical manifestation local, derive significance from being associated with global concepts? Nemrut Dağı's location in European ideas about classical antiquity and the superiority of Ancient Greek civilisation, Anatolian nationalist rhetoric, as well as religious mysticism, depends on the locality fitting in with notions that are undeniably global, such as nationalism or New Age-ism. As global concepts, these attribute significance to phenomena that manifest themselves in the local. At the same time, what is local contributes to the shaping of notions that are at a higher level of abstraction. If Nemrut Dağı as a locality can be experienced as Hellenic, the place is conceptually shaped by its being bundled with the idea of the superiority of the ancient Greeks. At the same time, what Nemrut Dağı means to people who experience the place in the context of a glorious Hellenistic past, also shapes their understanding of nationalism more generally.

In globalisation theory, the strong interdependency between the local and global resulted in the adoption of the term *glocal*: concepts and ideas that are globalised, always necessarily manifest themselves in one or another local context, while what is local cannot exist without being given meaning with reference to global processes (Swyngedouw 2004). These processes were captured by Anna Tsing (2000, 2005) in what she called 'scale-making'. Tsing (2000, 348) identifies "not just the global but also local and regional scales of all sorts". 'Scale-making' for Tsing raises a question such as: "Through what social and material processes and cultural commitments do localities or globalities come, tentatively, into being? How are varied regional geographies made real?" (Tsing 2000, 348). Rather than focusing

on what constitutes a specific level of scale, Tsing thus directs attention to the processes by which ideas, concepts, and practices are being reformulated across a variety of contexts. Such a processual approach allows to “reconcile” the local and the global (Marianna Papastephanou, this volume), but what remains, as pointed out by Anthony Kwame Appiah (2006), is that the global, by its very nature of being at a higher level of abstraction, overarches the local. Given the history of colonialism, and how that continues to shape the inequalities that create today’s world, perceiving the world in terms of the global and the local unavoidably shifts the balance towards the former (the global) as against the latter (the local). Considering that the global can only manifest itself through the local and is overarching, thinking with these two levels perpetuates the conceptual hierarchies which the globalisation debate intended to challenge. Appiah, the authors of this volume argue, proposed to overcome this imbalance by foregrounding the notion of cosmopolitanism instead (Appiah 2006). As Lynn Meskell puts it:

What is appealing about cosmopolitanism is that while the processes of globalisation lay claim to an overarching homogeneity of the planet in economic, political, and cultural spheres, the term cosmopolitanism might be employed as a counter to globalisation from below.

(Meskell 2009, 25)

Cosmopolitanism is radically decentred, and in this respect, it really differs from globalisation.

For Appiah, cosmopolitanism is “centrally concerned with recognising the value of different ways of life and fostering intercultural dialogue” (as phrased by Maciel (Maciel 2014, 74), cited in Miguel John Versluys and Ian Lilley, this volume). Cosmopolitanism serves for the authors of this volume as an inspiration to better understand heritage and identity formation since these are necessarily ‘rooted’. In terms of Mitchell Cohen, who worked with the concept prior to Appiah, “the fashioning of a dialectical concept of rooted cosmopolitanism, which accepts a multiplicity of roots and branches and that rests on the legitimacy of plural loyalties, of standing in many circles, but with common ground” (Cohen 1992, 480) cited in (Meskell 2009, 3). This rootedness is intended to overcome what Sandra Scham (2009, 175) calls the ‘conundrum’ of how to operate across different levels of scale and create room for the exploration of how people’s actions shape and constitute processes of meaning-making in practice.

In this volume rooted cosmopolitanism creates an agenda aimed at identifying trajectories by which heritage is identified, acknowledged, authorised, or challenged. It forms a focus that allows us to proceed from actual experiences, readings, and perceptions, and to analyse how these are being constituted in broader ideational realms. What actors does this involve? How are these actors part of what interest groups? And how do these actors, and the groups they belong to, locate themselves in terms of ideas and affinities? And, most significantly, what role do places, objects and events identified as heritage play in these respects? It is an approach that is actor-centric even if it aims to locate people and the heritage they

create and attribute meaning to within the broader cultural and political spheres that shape them. While rooted cosmopolitanism deals with phenomena that are located, meaning-making processes are inevitably suspended in theories that exceed a given place, event, or locality. These meaning-making processes can not only entail reference to religious ideas and histories and reflect local perceptions of landscape and the entities embedded in it but also encompass geographies that are political, deal with biodiversity and geology, tourism, and so on.

Empirical and conceptual elaborations

For each of the authors of the chapters of this volume, the focus on rooted cosmopolitanism results in an engagement with distinct levels of scale. Asma Mehan (this volume) shows how urban design, inspired by either capitalist or socialist modernism, had severe implications for the citizens of the cities in the Near East which were confronted with it, as historical neighbourhoods were often demolished overnight to make way for rigidly modernist housing estates and large squares. While this urban renewal was, in most cases, imposed with little compassion for the residents, Mehan shows that these urban designs have eventually been adopted by the people who came to live with them.

Alternatively, in a process that foregrounds the agency of the local, *pelota mixteca*—a ball game very popular in Mexico—derives its various significances from how it is integrated into broader ideational frameworks (Martin Berger, this volume). Berger explores the multiple and to some degree, contradictory ways in which people attribute meaning to the game. This includes the idea that the game is “of Spanish origin” as well as a pre-Hispanic “ancestral practice” (*una práctica ancestral*), which can, in the given context, seamlessly go together. For the players, the game can also be a modern sport. All these different meanings apart, notably among Mexican immigrants in the United States, it is purely the skill required to play the ball game that acts as an identity marker and therefore has the capacity to effectively create community.

Interpretations of heritage, and the histories associated with these, almost invariably have political connotations. This not only holds for the ball game *pelota mixteca* discussed above but also holds for contemporary interpretations of the past formulated by archaeologists in southwestern Turkey, as explored by Troels Myrup Kristensen, Vinnie Nørskov and Gönül Bozoğlu (this volume). This formulation of pasts involves the creation and dissemination of archaeological knowledge by both foreign and Turkish archaeologists, as well as its reception and utilisation by local non-professionals who have a solid commitment to the region’s history. Their powerful narratives are also being adopted by government representatives of Turkey’s southwestern region, for whom it creates the possibility to claim a cultural space that can compete with the Anatolian heritage, which, so far, has been the main inspiration for Turkish nationalism.

Nationalist narratives are not necessarily able or willing to accommodate the experiences of common people at heritage sites. For Green Island, a former detention centre for political prisoners off the coast of Taiwan, Fang-I-Chu (this volume)

scrutinises the multiple narratives associated with the island and its former detainees. While the state-run memorial centre provides a formal narrative of the terror which the inmates faced, the former detention centre is for numerous visitors also marked by the presence of many ghosts. These ghosts derive from victims of the violence meted out at Green Island. While the ghosts are not acknowledged in the official narrative of the memorial centre, their presence is an essential dimension of the heritage which the island constitutes for many of its visitors.

Expectations that take existing hegemonies into account are also discussed by Ljuben Tevdovski (this volume), who explores how mental templates shaped by what are dominant perspectives of globalisation influence our readings of the past. He asks: “why we are so dismissive of the whole idea of Muslim sailors predating Columbus in the Americas? Or why we are able to imagine a prehistoric migration to these continents, or a Viking landing, but not consider a Muslim one? . . . are we subconsciously ignoring or undermining the great and well documented contributions of Muslims in the development of Medieval and Early Modern cartography and science?” Oversights such as these are, in part, the result of hegemonic cultural perspectives among researchers. For such Eurocentric interpretations of human history and society to lose their dominance, the perspectives of non-Western researchers will need to gain more prominence, Tevdovski rightly concludes.

The epistemological importance which rooted cosmopolitanism can have to adjust the ways in which academic knowledge is typically framed, is also the main issue discussed by Alexander Geurds (this volume). He explores the ways in which it can serve as an inspiration to revise the relationship between interlocutors and researchers. Referring to his own fieldwork experiences in Nicaragua, Geurds argues for a collaborative archaeology, in which knowledge is co-created, to allow truly cosmopolitan relationships to emerge in the context of the research. Such an archaeology of shared exploration necessarily reveals multivocality and can therefore make a significant contribution to the foregrounding of the kind of voices that easily remain unheard.

The theme dealt with by Geurds resonates in the chapter of Miguel John Verluys (this volume), who analyses the importance attributed in popular perception to the contribution of the Romans to the early history of the Netherlands. He considers representations of the Roman era in popular media in the Netherlands and research conducted among Dutch primary school students. In popular perception, he concludes, the imagination of this Roman past is “innocent” and characterised by selective omissions and problematic assumptions. The Roman Empire, uncritically considered as such, can act as a model, an inspiration, and perhaps even serve to legitimise European imperialism.

Resolving the conundrum

The contribution which *Rooted Cosmopolitanism, Heritage and the Question of Belonging: Archaeological and Anthropological Perspectives* makes is at least two-fold. First, at a conceptual level, the volume explores the constitution of abstract inspirations that have a reach that is far beyond the regional. Rather than locating

such inspirations in a global sphere, the contributions to this volume show how, in given contexts, these can only manifest in relation to specific societal phenomena. Second, the contributions show how local and regional objects of heritage depend, for the meanings attributed to them, on their framing in relation to abstract conceptual notions.

Foregrounding rooted cosmopolitanism thus creates a focus which necessarily highlights how heritage manifests in a specific location and how the people who admire, reject, are indifferent to, or otherwise live with this heritage value and appreciate it. This connectedness between place and people makes methodological demands and explains why this volume is located at the intersection of Archaeology and Anthropology, even though most of the contributors locate themselves either in Archaeology or Anthropology. While the affinity between these two disciplines is in a thematic sense more or less self-evident, methodological repertoires tend to differ (Gosden 1999; Garrow and Yarrow 2010). Where an archaeological perspective necessarily considers a diachronic perspective, anthropologists can often live with a much shallower appreciation of time. Anthropologists, on the other hand, are place-wise in a comparative endeavour. Even if for many anthropologists conducting research in one's own cultural context has become the norm, research outcomes still need to be formulated for a delocalised global readership (although, in practice, this is typically Western and Anglophone). Adopting rooted cosmopolitanism as a conceptual framework demands both depth of time and change of place to be taken into consideration.

Rooted cosmopolitanism also demands the utilisation of methodologies that are oriented towards the people for whom the various contexts studied are of relevance. As is evident from the contributions to this volume, these always encompass a variety of stakeholders, with a broad range of interests. These interests are manifest in terms of meanings attributed, interpretations, and the kind of usages shaping stakeholders' engagement with a specific heritage location. While surveys can be used to obtain insights into the opinions of larger groups of people, ideas about religious or cosmological matters more generally may not be shared so easily in such a way. Even more so, people may not be able to vocalise, say, what is for them experiential knowledge. Instead, such knowledge is best researched through ethnography, which creates room for learning through informal interaction. Such an approach also allows for the creation of a clear distinction between what people perceive themselves and the analysis arrived at by the researcher. To do justice to this multivocality among stakeholders, it is essential to be able to identify and contextualise grounds for contestation, notably with respect to potentially sensitive domains such as religion or nationalism. Similar issues are at stake in contexts where heritage is even more explicitly politicised, as evident from my research on urban-rural cultural disparities in the uplands of North East India. Also, in this context, ethnography has produced knowledge problematising time and place, producing crucial insights into the processes of heritage-making figuring in these uplands (De Maaker 2022).

So, how does a conceptual framework which centres on rooted cosmopolitanism help to arrive at perspectives on heritage as well as belonging that do justice to

the subaltern voices that are so easily denied agency, or altogether overlooked? The rootedness, as an important qualifier of the kind of cosmopolitanism considered, ensures that the approach chosen is place, event, but even more so people-oriented. In operationalising how people relate to places and events it not only reveals the kind of differences in terms of experience and value existing among them but also shows how invariably, and in different ways, they locate themselves vis-à-vis larger conceptual realms, shaped by globalised notions such as nationalism and religion. Given the grounding of the various chapters of this volume in case studies, the contributing authors are able, each in their own way, to reveal how people position themselves in relation to heritage. The authors clarify how people in an everyday engagement with heritage actively engage with the conundrum of how their lives are shaped across different levels of scale. As both a concept and a methodology, rooted cosmopolitanism is excellently suited to bring the processes that thus play out into sharper focus.

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