Restorations of ancient temples in Java: a cross-cultural exploration along the lines of time, changing attitudes, and perspectives

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Abstract

Between 1913 and 1942, the Dutch Archaeological Service was responsible for the conservation of cultural heritage in the former Dutch East Indies. For a significant part this concerned Javanese temples from the Buddhist and Hindu era (roughly 700 AD-1550 AD). Although the restoration of temples, and the ways they were presented to the public, were strongly influenced by European views, restoration appeared to be a concern already in the fifteenth century during the heydays of the Hindu Majapahit empire. Old Javanese manuscripts report of the need for restoration as volcanic circumstances and the tropical climate impacted temples from the moment of construction onwards. In the centuries following Majapahit, Buddhist-Hindu and animistic beliefs kept on resonating. Temples and temple ruins gradually became home to the spirits to which people offered, where spirits were worshipped, or where ritualistic meals were held. Official heritage policy often clashed with such practices. For many local people, the maintenance of the spiritual balance seemed even more important than that of the material remains. To better understand the possible tensions between material preservation and (local) meaning, the policy of the Dutch Archaeological Service, will in this article be placed first within the much older tradition of heritage preservation dating back to Majapahit. This will then be contrasted with the actual attitudes and practices towards heritage, as were still common amongst Javanese people in the twentieth century, to finally assess what can be learned from these tensions regarding possible heritage policies for the future.

Keywords: Java; temples; preservation; Buddhism; Hinduism; animism.

In 1927, fragments of a once impressive Javanese Hindu sculpture group were found on a rice field in East Java.[1] This appeared to have been smashed to pieces by the owner of the field and as such forms a telling example of how heritage objects are sometimes deliberately destroyed for whatever reasons (FIG. 1). Destruction and decay of heritage objects on Java, has throughout history for an important part been the result of volcanic activity. Restoration and maintenance have therefore always been a necessity for the preservation of its temples. As

[1] Regarding the spelling of names of cities, gods, statues and places, etcetera relating to Java and/ or the Buddhist-Hindu past, I use the current common spelling as much as possible without diacritical marks, unless I quote or refer to titles of sources and literature. In the latter case I use the spelling as in the source.

FIG. 1 – Fragments of a Camundi statue group with inscriptions in Kawi and Nagari script, 1292 AD, Photo: Oudheidkundige Dienst-8903 (1927).

such, Java's geological circumstances were a concern already in the time of the Buddhist-Hindu kingdoms when the great temples were built, and their statues were carved. The first testimonials concerning the need for restoration also date from this time, long before Europeans would colonize Java.[2] What probably has its roots in this time too, is the way of dealing with heritage that can still be found on Java, in which the spiritual significance of temples and statues is at least equally or perhaps even more important than its physical condition. Even in the twentieth century, when most Javanese were no longer Buddhist or Hindu but Muslim, the spiritual significance of heritage sites, as well as the way people related to these sites, sometimes came into conflict with the official heritage policy as executed by Dutch archaeologists.[3] In the time of the Dutch Archaeological Service[4], restoration and reconstruction came

[2] Krom 1923, 1-2.

[3] Most studies on the history of Javanese heritage have been written in the twentieth century from a predominantly European (mostly Dutch) perspective. The authoritative studies on Javanese Buddhist and Hindu heritage published between the wars, were written by, for instance, Dutch archaeologists such as Nicolaas Krom and Willem Frederik Stutterheim. See for instance Krom, N. 1923 and W.F. Stutterheim, W.F. 1951. A.J. Bernet Kempers published an overview work on the history of heritage policy in Indonesia which includes the history of the Dutch Archaeological Service and their predecessors but also the early years of its Indonesian successor under the supervision of R. Soekmono. See Bernet Kempers, A.J. 1978. Recently, Marieke Bloembergen and Martijn Eickhoff researched the political implications of heritage formation within the former Dutch East Indies colonial empire. See Bloembergen, Eickhoff, 2020.

[4] In Dutch: "Oudheidkundige Dienst in Nederlandsch-Indië".

with careful scientific and aesthetic considerations. This apparently sparked rational debate amongst different archaeologists, architects and engineers, and the wider culturally informed audiences in both the Netherlands and Java. Subsequently this raises the important question whether, or to what extent, policy aimed at the preservation and management of material heritage can go hand in hand with the spiritual experience of that heritage. Moreover, it raises the relevant question what can be learned from the history of different attitudes towards heritage, especially when considering the current and urgent challenges of a political, cultural, and, above all, climatological kind.

Based on both Dutch and Javanese sources, as well as personal observations, I will therefore contribute to this debate by emphasizing the importance of a heritage policy that respects and takes into account the local origins of heritage, its relationship to local communities, and which takes into account the fact that although nothing material lasts forever, its various layers of cultural, religious and socio-political significance, lives on in the rituals people perform and in the stories they tell.

Even though the Dutch Archaeological Service's official task concerned the maintenance and preservation of Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, Dutch, Portuguese, and so-called "indigenous" heritage of the entire archipelago, the Buddhist-Hindu heritage on the island of Java remained the core of its activities.[5] It was this heritage that had sparked the European interest in Javanese history in the early nineteenth century already. At the time, the archipelago was shortly reigned by the British, whose governor Sir Thomas Raffles had a keen interest in the history of the ancient temples such as the Borobudur.[6] Following the Vienna conference of 1815, the newly formed Kingdom of the Netherlands resumed Dutch power over the archipelago, and various expeditions were undertaken on behalf of King William I, such as on the island of Java to map its nature, culture and people of which the paintings of the southern Netherlandish painter Antoine Payen still testify and which, for instance, show the Borobudur and Candi Sewu.[7] Payen stood in a longer tradition of Dutch and other European artists who from 1600 onwards, from the time the VOC (Dutch East indies trading company) started to dominate the "trade" in the East, depicted the old monuments and temples of what is now Indonesia.[8] Despite Java having become Islamic from about 1500 onwards, even in the twentieth century, archaeologists such as Frederik David Kan Bosch and Willem Stutterheim, as well as architects such as Henri Maclaine Pont and Hendrik Berlage, who visited Java in 1923, were mainly inspired by the Buddhist-Hindu heritage. In this heritage, they recognized Java's so-called glorious past.[9]

The artistic importance of the Buddhist and Hindu temples on Java, was, for instance, compared to that of the Gothic Cathedrals or of Renaissance architecture in Europe. As such, Buddhist and Hindu temples became a reference point for Javanese art history, perhaps akin

[5] The Archaeological Service was founded in 1913 with Nicolaas Krom as its first chef. The Service was a more profound successor of an earlier commission under the leadership of Krom that was mainly concerned with the heritage of Java and Madura. Officially, the work terrain of the Archaeological Service covered the entire Dutch East Indies. Bernet Kempers 1978, 78-90.

[6] Bloembergen, Eickhoff 2020, 34. This followed the bankruptcy of the VOC and the period of the so-called Batavian Republic (1795-1806), the Kingdom Holland, as established by the French (1806-1810), and the period of occupation by the Napoleonic Imperium (1810-1813).

[7] Reynaerts 2019, 74.

[8] See Haks, Maris 1995, for an overview of examples.

[9] De Vries, Segaar-Höweler 2009, 35-37; Van Bergeijk 2011, 30-32. See also Bosch 1938 and Stutterheim 1951.

to how, for instance, architecture from Greek and Roman antiquity, and its revival during the Renaissance, had for a long time been a reference point within European art history (and to an extent maybe still is).[10]

The extensive restoration of Borobudur, which was undertaken between 1907 and 1911 under the leadership of Theodoor van Erp, contributed significantly to this. Van Erp's campaign resulted in a wealth of information, not only on the size of the temple complex, but also on the richness and quality of the relief sculptures, the Buddha statues, and the ornaments applied to the temple, which altogether proved to be highly informative about the culture of the eighth-century Buddhist Sailendra dynasty.[11] Moreover, it provided significant knowledge on Javanese Buddhist architecture and on the structural problems its architects must have already encountered during the building phase.[12] But it also made clear how monuments like Borobudur had suffered from the geological and climatological circumstances (FIG. 2). In the case of Borobudur, specifically the effect of water that in the course of time had been seeping through its porous volcanic stones.[13]

FIG. 2 – Candi Borobudur, South West view, here it is still partly visible how tropical vegetation must have once surrounded and overgrown the monument, Photo: OD-00444b (circa 1901-1911).

[10] Van Bergeijk 2011, 35.
[11] Bernet Kempers 1978, 63.
[12] Klokke 2013, 10-11.
[13] Bernet Kempers 1978, 67-68.

FIG. 3 – Candi Borobudur, Central Java, 9th century, andesite, ca. 113 m. Photo: Gunawan Kartapranata. Creative Commons. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en.

Borobudur is Java's largest Buddhist construction, and it is also still the largest Buddhist sacred construction in the world (FIG. 3).

It was built in the early ninth century during which the central power of the Sailendra dynasty concentrated in central Java near present day Yogyakarta.[14] Borobudur is a stupa which means it is a sacred construction placed over either textual (metaphysical) or physical relics of the Buddha. The latter applies to early stupas mainly and Borobudur is therefore likely a stupa placed upon what can be regarded as a metaphysical relic, usually a text regarded as representing the essence of the Buddha.[15] Apart from its sheer size, Borobudur is also an important monument because of its figurative and narrative relief sculpture which unfolds before the eye of the pilgrim when walking clockwise along the terraces of the monument towards the top. Apart from their religious and philosophical significance many of these reliefs also provide important documentation about life and culture on Java during this dynasty, for instance, in the form of depictions of ships, architectural constructions, but also clothing, music, ritual and domesticated animals (FIG. 4).[16]

Van Erp's restoration was considered the first one that followed a structured plan and was properly undertaken.[17] Part of the campaign considered the extensive photographic documentation of the monument, which included detailed photographs of its architectural elements, galleries, ornaments, reliefs and Buddha statues.[18] To this day, researchers continue to benefit from this important source. Van Erp lacked the financial and material resources for a complete restoration. Moreover, it was also not considered scientifically justified to replace missing stones from the reliefs with what could only be mere interpretations.[19] Nevertheless, Van

[14] Klokke 2003, 23-24; Soekmono 1992, 70-71.
[15] Chutiwongs 2005, 42.
[16] See for instance Levin 2013, 27-40.
[17] Which was quite an achievement for someone who was not an archaeologist but a military engineer. Bernet Kempers 1978, 69.
[18] See Krom and Van Erp, 1921-1931: *Beschrijving van Barabudur*, 2 vols. The Hague.
[19] Bernet Kempers 1978, 71, 77. In the 1970s another major restoration was undertaken at Borobudur with new technological means. This one was financially supported by UNESCO. Bernet Kempers 1978, 212-221.

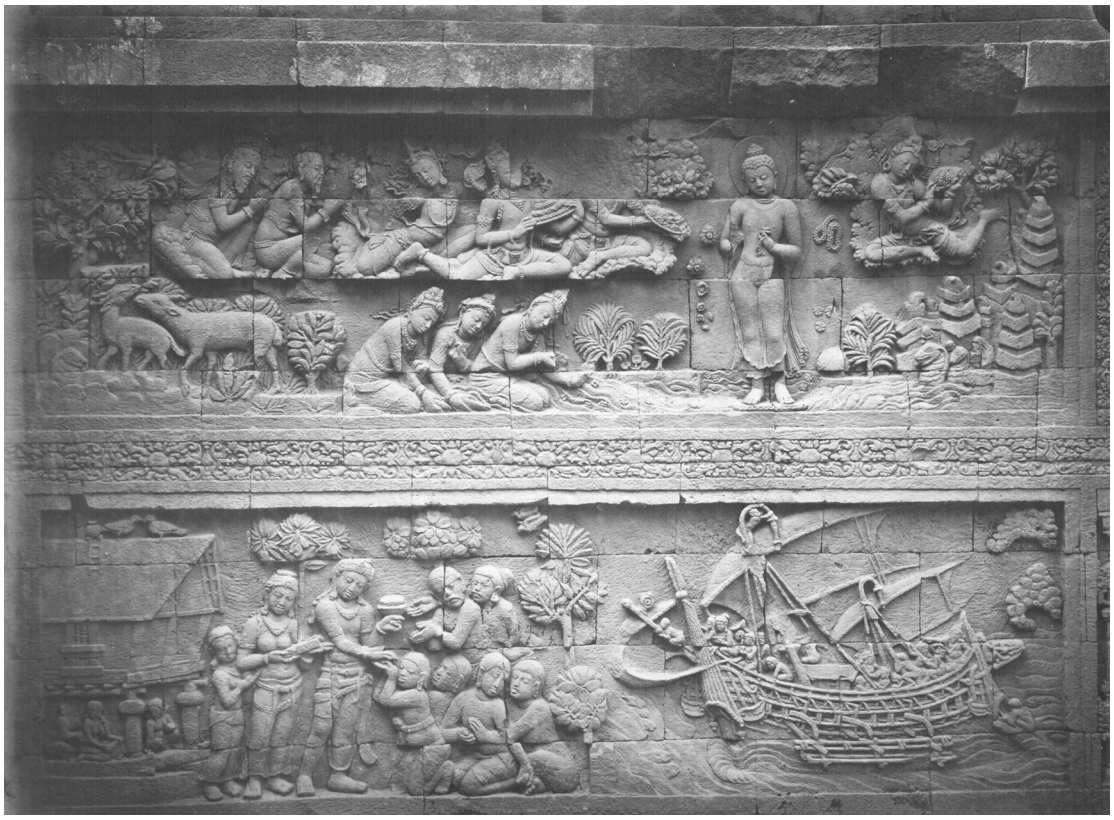

FIG. 4 – Siddhartha takes a bath (top), The story of Rudrayana: Hiru lands at Hiruka (bottom), Series 1a relief 86 (top), Series 1b relief 86 (bottom), Candi Borobodur, Central Java, 9th century, andesite. Photo: Isodore van Kinsbergen (1873). Public domain.

Erp's campaign, which offered Borobudur more than a little of its former glory, further contributed to the almost mythical status that the impressive monument had acquired over time. It would therefore leave an unforgettable impression on many of its visitors.

During a trip on Java in 1921, Dutch novelist Louis Couperus, also wrote in admiration about the beauty of Borobudur, which one should definitely see on a moonlit tropical night.[20] But despite his admiration Couperus also remarked that Borobudur's beauty is relative and dependent on context, unlike the beauty of Greek antiquity that according to Couperus would be absolute and independent of time and atmosphere (such as moonlit nights).[21] In other words, the beauty of the Greek antiquity is universal and that of Borobudur is not. This is a striking example of how despite the admiration for Javanese antiquities, they were apparently not judged on the same merits as those from Europe, at least according to Couperus. But they were nevertheless subject to European notions of how heritage sites should be preserved and presented.

[20] Couperus 1923, 201-206.
[21] Couperus 1923, 126-127.

The Buddhist-Hindu heritage of Java

Buddhism and Hinduism flourished on the island of Java from the seventh century onwards after reaching the island through trade routes with the Indian subcontinent.[22] Even though there are limited sources about the period prior to 700 AD, there is enough indication that influences from India had already reached West-Java during the Tarumanagara Kingdom in the second half of the fifth century in which there was knowledge of, for example, Sanskrit. The extent to which the Javanese population was subject to a process of "Indianisation" or whether "Indian" influences rather were taken up into an already existing high Javanese culture, is a topic of debate amongst historians.[23] Scholar of Javanese art Edi Sedyawati argues that on the basis of more than a century of research, it has become much more plausible to assume that important elements of Javanese culture, such as gamelan music or the wayang play, were probably part of an already existing Javanese culture. Buddhist and Hindu elements were then gradually as well as consciously adopted and adapted to Javanese cultural custom.[24] Moreover, in the Javanese Kingdoms before the eighth-century there already existed the idea of the gated city, there would have been a system to calculate time, and obviously, there was the notion of the concept of the kingdom and the king as its ruler. These would have been established before and regardless of the so-called process of "indianisation".[25]

Despite this, much more is known about the period after the eighth-century, the time when the renowned monuments such as Borobudur and the temples at Prambanan were built. The Buddhist Sailendra dynasty was followed by the Hindu kings during whose reigns the large temple complex at Prambanan was built. At its heart is the Loro Jonggrang complex which is formed around the three main temples dedicated to the "trimurti", the Hindu gods Brahma, Shiva, and Vishnu of which the central temple dedicated to Shiva is forty-seven metres high (FIG. 5). The three main temples are surrounded by three large temple squares that each enclose each other. The first contains the three main temples and a couple of smaller structures. Between the first and the second ring wall there are 224 smaller temples that would have been each fourteen metres high. As far as known, the third temple square did not contain any temple structures but all in all, the Loro Jonggrang at Prambanan is gigantic.[26]

From the tenth century onwards the centre of power shifts from Central to Eastern Java. Whether this was based on economic or religious reasons is subject to speculation. Nevertheless, according to Jan Fontein it is more likely that the move to the east may have been the result of a large eruption of the Merapi volcano in the tenth century.[27]

[22] It must be noted that Buddhism and Hinduism are often named in one term regarding Java, but of course there are differences, for instance, in the style of temple architecture. See Klokke 2003, 24-25.
[23] For the sake of convenience, I use the term "Indian" here as referring to coming from the Indian subcontinent, but this term is of course also problematic as it was a term given to this area by Europeans. Moreover, the Indian subcontinent between 500 and 1000 AD was ruled by various empires and politically, religiously and culturally not homogeneous. See Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Indian (adj. & n.)," March 2024, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/7444810864. See also Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "India (n.)," December 2023, https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3183874375.
[24] Sedyawati 1992, 98.
[25] Sedyawati 1992, 100-103.
[26] Bernet Kempers 1978, 98.
[27] Fontein 1992, 41.

FIG. 5 – Candi Loro Jonggrang with central Temple dedicated to Shiva, Prambanan, Central Java, ca. 900, Photo: author (May 2023).

In the centuries between the year 1000 and 1500 roughly, three main Hindu Kingdoms can be distinguished which are those of Kadiri, Singhasari and Majapahit. In general, the temples and temple complexes from these Kingdoms are not as huge and comprehensive as that of the Borobudur and Prambanan. The Candi Singosari from the Singhasari kingdom is nevertheless considered a highlight in Javanese art history due to the quality of its statues. The Prajnaparamita statue from the Singosari area, is regarded as belonging to the finest sculpture produced on Java (FIG. 6). Many of these statues were shipped to the Leiden Ethnological Museum in the nineteenth century but the Prajnaparamita has been returned to Indonesia in the 1970s and is now on display in the Museum Nasional in Jakarta.[28] In August 2023, seven other statues from Singosari were returned to Indonesia after having been in the Leiden collection for two centuries.[29]

[28] Fontein, 1992, 160. This statue is not from the Singosari temple itself but came from a nearby temple which no longer exists. In 1820, it was taken by C.G. C. Reinward to the Netherlands where it became part of the collection of the Museum of Ethnology in Leiden. In January 1978 the statue was returned to Indonesia. Several plaster casts can still be found in Leiden today. https://hdl.handle.net/20.500.11840/916236. Accessed 1 July 2023.

[29] https://leiden.wereldmuseum.nl/nl/over-wereldmuseum-leiden/onze-collectie/alles-over-de-restitutie-aan-indonesie. Accessed 23 May 2024. See also Fontein, Soekmono, Sedyawati 1992, 158, 162.

FIG. 6 – Prajnaparamita, goddess of wisdom, ca. 1300, from Candi Singosari, East Java, andesite, 126 cm., Museum Nasional, Jakarta. Photo: Gunawan Kartapranata. Creative Commons. https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0/deed.en.

The last of the East Java kingdoms, that of Majapahit would become the largest and its influence probably stretched across several islands which are today part of modern Indonesia. It may therefore not be surprising that in the eyes of later Indonesian nationalists, Majapahit was considered an example of a great pre-Dutch empire which was powerful and almost as large as the archipelago under Dutch rule at its peak.[30] The remains of this empire in the form of bathing places, temples and city gates, can be found in and near the present-day village of Trowulan in the region of Mojokerto. This region would have been the location of the former capital of the Majapahit empire. Its discovery and reconstruction were of special interest to Dutch architect and amateur archaeologist Henri Maclaine Pont, who spent several years working on excavations in the Trowulun area and who was also founder of the Majapahit organisation in 1923. His tiny house from which he worked whenever he was in Trowulan is still part of the present-day office for preservation of cultural heritage (Balai Pelestarian Kebudayaan Wilayah XI) in East-Java.[31]

Although Majapahit appealed to the imagination in many ways and to many different groups, its art, as well as that of the other East Javanese kingdoms, was considered more removed from the "Indian" inspired art and architecture from Central Java, and was therefore regarded as being a more local typical Javanese form of Hindu art. Archaeologist Nicolaas Krom valued the art and architecture from Eastern Java as less "classical" and thus also lower in status.[32]

Restoration during Majapahit

The restoration history of Buddhist and Hindu monuments is a long and complex one, which can only be touched upon here briefly. However, restoration was at least already a concern during the time of Majapahit and perhaps even before. In 1916, archaeologist Frederik David Kan Bosch discussed a passage from the Nagarakertagama, a Javanese epic poem in the form of a praise of King Rajasanagara, which mentions a visit of the Majapahit King Hayam Wuruk (1350-89) in 1361[33] to a shrine which would have been the memorial temple of King Kertarajasa (1293-1309). The shrine was located at Simping near present day Blitar which according to Bosch is likely the Candi Sumberjati.[34] In the passage we find remarks about the King's considerations regarding the possible restoration of the shrine:

> Having departed from Lodaya he remained at Simping, desiring to use the opportunity to restore the holy sanctuary. The dilapidation of the tower-temple, as well as its distance to the west, were reasons why it should be rebuilt a little further to the east.[35]

[30] Van Reybrouck 2020, 30.

[31] De Vries, Segaar-Höweler 2009, 47. The first excavations had been undertaken on the initiative of Kromowidjojo Adinegoro, the regent of Mojokerto. See also Bosch 1924, 4.

[32] Bloembergen, Eickhoff 2020, 130.

[33] For the sake of clarity, I will use dates according to the Christian calendar. The old Hindu calendar used on Java differs seventy-eight years from the Christian one, meaning that 1361 is year 1283 in the traditional one.

[34] Bosch substantiates his identification of the sanctuary at Simping as Candi Sumberjati based on an ornamented stone that was found by Perquin in 1915 during the excavation of the temple and which contains on the sides of the stone three times an inscription of the year 1283, which corresponds to the year Hayam Wuruk visited the temple and decided to restore it. Bosch 1916, 51-54.

[35] Mpu Prapanca 61.4. In this article I quote from the English translation by Robson from 1995. See also Bosch 1916, 51-54; Kern 1913, 397. Perquin noticed a heavy wall to the northside of Candi Sumberjati which he considered to be too

The preparations of the restoration must have started right away as the Nagarakertagama continues:

> Also the dimensions had not yet been checked against the charter, and so they were measured right around in fathoms, beginning with the east and indicated with markers.[36]

The cause of this collapse is not mentioned but regarding Java's geological circumstances, an earthquake should not be ruled out. Earthquakes and volcanic eruptions must therefore have been reasons to restore temples regularly.[37]

Earlier in the Nagarakertagama another visit to a damaged sanctuary is described which King Hayam Wuruk already undertook before he visited the one at Simping. It concerns what would have been the shrine of King Rajasa (born as Ken Arok), founder of the Rajasa dynasty and Singhasari kingdom. South of the shrine of this temple complex, King Hayam Waruk encounters an earlier Buddhist sanctuary. The stanza bears witness of a crypt within the sanctuary whose platform west to the stair of a shrine, which would still have been in a good state, would have been collapsed.[38] The following stanzas describe the state of the terrain which would have been flattened and would have been overgrown by vegetation. Moreover, the sculpted figures and ornaments appeared pale and would have faded. In the one last stanza the poet Prapanca finally pleas for a restoration and the poet fixes all hopes on King Hayam Wuruk, because of his utter excellence.[39] Professor Kern argued that it was at least strange that this important tomb, which would have been founded after King Rajasa's death in 1227, had already been in such a bad state in the year 1365 when the Nagarakertagama was written.[40] However, in his commentary to Kern's translation, professor Krom remarks that the stanzas dedicated to King Rajasa's tomb do not testify of disrepair but that this only applies to the stanzas dedicated to the Buddhist shrine south of this tomb. Krom points to stanza 40.5 in which one can read that in the year 1227 King Rajasa was buried twice in Kagenengan on both a Hindu and a Buddhist temple. According to Krom canto 37 thus indicates that it was only the Buddhist sanctuary, the second tomb, which would have been neglected at the cost

heavy to be a ring wall and too close to the main building. He therefore assumed this wall could have been remains of the tower that was built more to the East. See Bosch 1917, 45-46.

[36] Mpu Prapanca 62.1. The "canto" continues as follows: "But as the monastery of Gurung-gurung was taken as land for the sanctuary, Gontong and Wisnu Rare would be a Bajradhara domain as His Majesty's compensation." This indicates that the restored temple-tower was planned to the east to where apparently the monastery was. According to Bosch, a local informant would have told that there was a tiny village called "Gagoeroeng" near Candi Sumberjati. This name would have been a corruption of the name "Gaga-woeroeng" but according to Bosch, more likely a corruption of "Goegoeroeng" which in turn is a derivative of "Goeroeng Goeroeng", the name of the monastery. See Bosch 1917, 46. Either the temple-tower was placed where the monastery was, or it was placed on land that belonged to the monastery.

[37] It is telling that the birth of king Rajasanagara would even have been marked by an eruption of Mount Kampud, which according to Robson is Mount Kelud. See Robson 1995, 98. This eruption would have wiped out all the evildoers in the kingdom. Mpu Prapanca 1.4.

[38] Mpu Prapanca 37.3. Here Robson's English translation differs from Kern's Dutch translation (1913). According to Robson's translation only the western part of the platform would have been collapsed but according to Kern's, the platform has collapsed on both the west and the east side. Robson 1995, 50. Kern, Krom 1919, 91.

[39] Mpu Prapanca 37.6. At least that's how both Robson and Kern interpreted this stanza. See Robson 1995, 118; Kern, Krom 1919, 92.

[40] Kern, Krom 1919, 92. Their theory that this temple functioned as a tomb is outdated.

of the Hindu one.[41] Even though geological activity could well explain why some sanctuaries had fallen into a state of disrepair so shortly after they were founded, it seems that in this case it was indeed neglect and that such should probably be ascribed to religious and political changes.

In any case, it is significant to read that Prapanca has such confidence in King Hayam Wuruk considering matters of restoration. Based on the Nagarakertagama it can even be said that the king led what can be interpreted as a distant precursor of what now would be called heritage policy:

> Then as for the royal sanctuaries founded by the King's ancestors in the past, all that he had not yet completed were put in order, guarded and assiduously cared for. Any that lacked a charter was to be provided with one on his instructions by experts in the proper formulas, so that its benefit might be lasting, without giving rise to disputes, and might descend to all his descendants in later years.[42]

What follows in the next cantos is a description of the most important royal sanctuaries out of twenty-seven ones in total at the time of writing in 1365. Each of the sanctuaries will be guarded by statesmen together with abbots and royal priests. They in turn are governed by a religious superintendent.[43] With regard to so-called free sanctuaries superintendents were appointed for the Hindu and Buddhist sanctuaries and for those of the ascetics.[44] This well thought out way of organizing supervision shows how important it was for the King to take care of all the sanctuaries in the Kingdom.

After 1519, when Girindrawardhana, the last of the Kings of Majapahit had died, Islam would become the dominant religion on Java. If anything, Java's geological activity must have been one of the reasons why many Buddhist and Hindu temples fell into ruin when no longer actively used. Besides, they fell victim to neglect and also became a source of cheap building material.[45]

Geological activity was obviously also one of the problems the later Dutch Archaeological Service had to deal with. During the restoration campaign at Prambanan, the Archaeological Survey of 1926 reports that due to many smaller earthquakes in 1925, pieces of stone fell from the temples.[46] Java's humid tropical climate posed another challenge. From a preservation perspective such a climate is far from ideal. If a temple did not collapse due to earth-

[41] Mpu Prapanca 40.5. See Kern, Krom 1919, 272. Krom refers to an article by Van Stein Callenfels in which Kern's remark was already discussed as a possible error. Van Stein Callenfels explains the emphasis of the poet Prapanca on the delipidated state of the Buddhist temple at Kagenengan and his successive plea for restoration from the fact the poet himself was a Buddhist. Van Stein Callenfels 1916, 200.

[42] Mpu Prapanca 73.2.

[43] Mpu Prapanca 74.2, 75.1. According to Kern that superintendent would have been Arya Wiradhikara. Krom, however, doubts whether this is a name and rather argues this is a title for a superintendent. Kern, Krom 1919, 172, 296. However, in Robson's 1995 translation it appears that Robson interprets Arya Wiradikhara as the name of a person and not as a title. After all his translation reads: "But the official permitted to be in charge of them all is Arya Wiradhikara, (…)." See Robson 1995, 79.

[44] Mpu Prapanca 75.2-78.7. In the canto's 76,77, and 78 these sanctuaries are listed.

[45] Kinney, Klokke, Kieven 2003, 161-162.

[46] Bosch 1926, 133.

quakes, eruptions or lahars, the roots of tropical vegetation with which many temples were overgrown could in the course of time push foundational stones apart.[47]

Restoration debate

The large campaign to restore the temple complex at Prambanan, resulted in a heated debate between the head of the Service, Frederik David Kan Bosch, who was in support of the reconstruction of temples, with his predecessor Nicolaas Krom, who had always been hesitant and argued that restoration (let alone reconstruction) was only justifiable if deemed necessary from a scientific perspective, or to prevent a temple from further decay.[48] After all, reconstruction often means re-interpretation, especially in the case when original stones were missing. During a 1920 restoration at the bathing complex of Panataran, the height of a small tower on the west wall of the complex whose original height could not be fully reconstructed, was estimated based on a sense for proportion rather than based on scientific evidence. According to archaeologist De Haan, this sacrifice of what he regarded a slight scientific interest, could not compensate for the major aesthetic concern.[49]

It was these kinds of considerations that Nicolaas Krom was hesitant about. Krom clearly distinguished between restoration and reconstruction. The latter would not serve any scientific interest even though the reconstruction work itself might be scientifically executed. If the purpose of that endeavour is not to prevent the found remains of a temple but to rediscover its supposed original form, one enters the slippery domain of the re-interpretation of the past. It was precisely this danger why Krom preferred to reconstruct on paper only. Moreover, the actual reconstruction of a temple would bring the risk that future visitors could accept the reconstructed temple as exemplary for its true historical condition. The implications of this risk intensified considering the lack of historical evidence some reconstructions were based on. At the same time, Krom acknowledged there were sometimes cases in which important aesthetic concerns could outweigh scientific objections. In such cases, Krom regarded reconstruction optional but only when it can be proved that the result of that reconstruction is indeed as truthful to the original state as possible.[50]

Despite Krom's scientific objections to reconstruction, under his successor Bosch, the Archaeological Service no longer saw itself devoted to a scientific task only; other arguments for reconstruction enter the debate. This is best expressed by Willem Frederik Stutterheim,

[47] See for instance on the effect of Lahars, the Archeological Survey of 1919. See OD 1919, 47, 51, 89. See also Soekmono 1992, 88. A similar account on vegetation taking over at a temple site could already be read in the Nagarakertagama regarding the Buddhist tomb at Kagenengan. See Mpu Prapanca 37.4.

[48] Bernet Kempers 1978, 107-112.

[49] De Haan 1920, 127-129.

[50] Krom 1911, 5-6. This so-called restoration debate is still relevant as it has had its influence on the Indonesian successors of the Archaeological Service. Krom's hesitance towards full reconstruction of temples appear to resonate in those of R. Soekmono who was director of the National Archaeological Institute of the Republic of Indonesia (Lembaga Purbakala dan Peninggalan Nasional Republik Indonesia) between 1953 and 1973. Bernet Kempers 1978, 78. According to Soekmono, restoration mainly means repair and only in cases when enough original stones are available a full construction is possible. Krom's views are particularly reflected in Soekmono's statement that any new stones may only be made if this is strictly necessary for restoration, but that these should be neutral stones without relief sculpture or ornament. The archeologist should stay as close as possible to what is thought to be the original state of the temple. Soekmono 1992, 88-94.

who looks back on the Service's most important achievements in a publication from 1938 on the Service's twenty-fifth anniversary. Stutterheim writes:

> They [ancient buildings] required more than safeguarding walls and gates that threatened to collapse, demanded restoration, yes even reconstruction, to exemplify the great achievements of the past clearly before the eyes of the heirs as example to emulate and for visitors who will fully enjoy the now often hidden beauty. (Translation; author).[51]

Even though this statement still testifies of a concern with scientific research of the heritage, as well as its restoration, as a necessity to preserve it from further decay, it concerns much more. Heritage apparently served as an example for the population of Java. Stutterheim's implicit wish that they should imitate their great past, also implies a value judgment about that cultural past, by which he means the Buddhist-Hindu past, as compared to the Javanese culture of the twentieth century. The statement about reconstructed heritage as an example worth emulating, can thus be understood as an expression of what can be regarded the educational task of the Service, but should therefore also be read in the light of its political, cultural, and religious significance, considering that most of the Javanese population in the twentieth century was Muslim. Moreover, Stutterheim's remark shows that heritage, according to the Dutch Archaeological Service, should apparently also serve aesthetic pleasure, which raises the question on the nature of what might be European inspired beauty ideals that seeped through the Dutch heritage policy on Java. It also addresses the question on how this policy related to the ways in which the Javanese population, to whom this was addressed, approached their heritage in daily practice.

Reception on Java

From the perspective of presenting the population of Java with their so-called glorious past, nothing could situate the cause better than a fully reconstructed temple that could impress the visitor. And impressive this heritage apparently was, even in cases when temples were not yet fully reconstructed. Already in the first quarterly Archaeological Survey from 1914, Krom mentions that the interest of the local people for the Prambanan complex had increased significantly. Numbers of visits to the site in 1913, show an increase of sixty percent.[52] At that time, the major restoration campaign at Prambanan had yet to begin.[53]

Besides temple sites, museums were also popular. Regarding this, the role of the Javanese aristocracy should not be unmentioned, especially that of the regent of Mojokerto: Kromodjojo Adinegoro IV, founder of the Mojokerto museum in 1911 (which existed until 1995). Adinegoro had an interest in the history of Java, was familiar with the ancient Javanese languages, but also spoke Dutch and as a Javanese aristocrat had received Dutch higher

[51] "Zij eischten meer dan het veilig stellen van met instorting dreigende muren en poorten, eischten restauratie, ja zelfs wederopbouw, opdat het nageslacht duidelijk en tot navolging de grootsche prestaties van het verleden voor oogen zou krijgen en de bezoekers ten volle van de thans vaak verborgen schoonheid zouden kunnen genieten." Stutterheim 1938, 3.
[52] Krom 1914, 3.
[53] Preparations for that campaign began in 1918. The restoration of the main temple alone would take 35 years. See Bernet Kempers 1978, 98.

education.[54] With the founding of the museum, Adinegoro's collection, which he considered a gift to the colonial government, turned from a private into a public one.[55] In August 1914, the museum would have welcomed 250 visitors on average daily, on some holidays even as much as 1200.[56] However, the popularity of a site or a museum often depended on very local circumstances. Much to the dismay of the Archaeological Service the condition of the collection of statues at Magelang in 1915, would have been deplorable due to neglect by the local authorities responsible. This collection, unlike that of Mojokerto, would not have had a lot of public attention either.[57]

European aesthetic concerns must have played an important role regarding the scenic character and the appearance of a temple or a temple site. During the 1928 reconstruction of the eighth-century Buddhist Candi Sari, the idea was to acquire more land around the temple, to enable visitors approaching it, to look at the temple from a distance. The road to the temple was relocated such that the visitor would approach the temple terrain at a straight angle from the temple's entrance (FIG. 7).[58]

FIG. 7 – Candi Sari, 8th century, Kalasan, Central Java, 17.3 x 10 x 17 m. Photo: author (May 2023).

[54] Bloembergen, Eickhoff 2020, 133.
[55] Bloembergen, Eickhoff 2020, 129.
[56] Bosch 1915, 101. See also Krom 1920, 117. Krom here also explicitly emphasizes the correct insight of the regent considering the educational importance of the collection for the visitors.
[57] Bosch 1916, 88.
[58] Bosch 1929, 131.

This demonstrates the careful thought that was given to how the visitor should approach the temple, how the temple should slowly rise before the eye of the visitor, how the temple should be situated in the landscape, and how its beauty should relate to its natural surroundings. In the case of the Candi Sari, it had not only impressed those who would visit the temple in Java, but also far beyond. The restoration in 1928 proceeded an earlier completely reconstructed copy of the temple as part of the Dutch pavilion during the world exhibition in Paris in 1900 (FIG. 8).

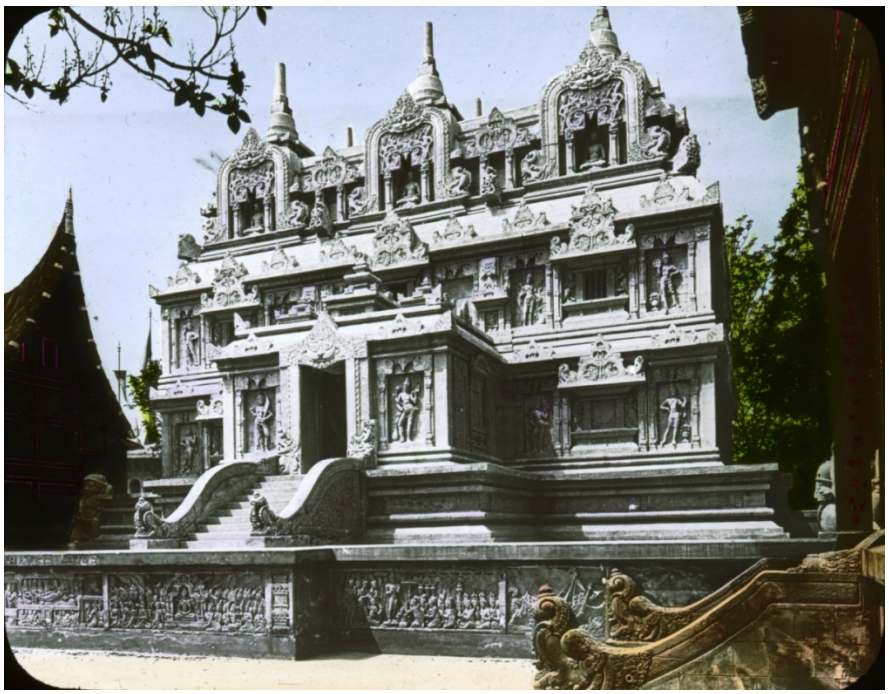

FIG. 8 – Paris Exposition: Dutch East Indies Pavilion, Paris, France, 1900. Pavilion of the Dutch East Indies. - Exhibiting the replica of Candi Sari (8th-century Central Java, Prambanan Plain, Indonesia) Brooklyn Museum, Goodyear Archival Collection. Photo: Brooklyn Museum.

According to Marieke Bloembergen the organisers had chosen to exhibit this replica of Candi Sari to draw the Dutch government's attention to the necessity of preserving the Buddhist-Hindu heritage on Java.[59] Moreover, Bloembergen states that Candi Sari not only represented early Javanese civilisation but as such also exemplified "a future goal of civilisa-

[59] Bloembergen 2006, 165. The decision to make a replica of Candi Sari has been attributed to Jan Willem IJzerman, an engineer active on Java who while working on the railways in Central Java had become interested in Buddhist Hindu heritage due to his encounters with the remains of Prambanan and with the Borobudur. He was, for instance, founder of an Archaeological Society in Yogyakarta in 1885. See Bloembergen 2006, 192. It would be partly thanks to this exhibition that the Archaeological Commission would be founded in 1901, the precursor of the Archaeological Service. The time seemed ripe for this, partly because of the World Exhibition in Paris sparked a lot of interest in Buddhist-Hindu art in Europe around the turn of the century. Bernet Kempers 1978, 47. Marieke Bloembergen also points out that this interest came forth from the fact that this heritage was promoted as a novelty as the Dutch emphasized that with the replica of Candi Sari and the art objects that it contained, it was the first time that Buddhist-Hindu heritage was displayed in Europe. See Bloembergen 2006, 208.

tion".[60] Partly as a result of the intensive colonization process in the nineteenth century, as a result of which more and more land had come under direct Dutch control, the colonial regime had increasingly come into contact with the Buddhist and Hindu remains. This had changed the perspective on the history of Javanese civilization which appeared to be complex and far from "primitive". But besides, with highlighting the replica of Candi Sari as the main Dutch pavilion, the Dutch also wanted to compete with French Indochina. According to Bloembergen after all '(...) a temple that was far older than the pagoda of Phnom-Penh.'[61] Respect for "indigenous" heritage thus went hand in hand with colonial competition.

Making a replica naturally gives aesthetic possibilities that were not possible at the original temple. For example, the ornaments, relief sculpture, but also the access staircase of the replica of Candi Sari, were designed in a way that was no longer possible at the real Candi Sari due to the missing of original stones. However, the fact that in 1928 so much attention was dedicated to how the temple would appear from its surroundings might be traced back to the representative role the replica had played in Paris.

Aesthetic concerns had also played a role in 1926 at Candi Kidal. When the Javanese gatekeeper of the temple wanted to plant rows of trees at both sides of the temple's entrance road, the Archaeological Service worried it would hinder the view on the temple. Based on what is in the report, there would have been a tree already blocking the view. Furthermore, the report states that the entrance road to the temple could be further excavated such that the temple would to a lesser extent appear as if in a pit (FIG. 9).[62]

The presence of trees around a temple was more often a problem as it was not always possible to remove a tree just like that. Especially in the case of very old trees that, according to the population, had a sacred status. Sometimes, a Waringin tree was also preserved because of its supposed picturesque effect such as would have been the case at Candi Tuban.[63] Furthermore, over time most temples had sunk which after excavation and restoration caused a visible difference compared to the surrounding terrain which somehow needed to be compensated for.

As mentioned, ideas about how a temple can be beautifully situated in a landscape, were a significant concern in restorations of temples, and European-inspired notions on the scenic character of heritage sites played a role. However, in the time of Majapahit the poet Prapanca already had an eye for the scenic aspects of the places in which sanctuaries were located. For instance, it was not just the beauty of the Hindu temple at Kagenengan itself that was praised, but also its location and its relationship to the vegetation:

> Let us describe the condition of the temple: its layout is matchless,
> On the outside is a very splendid gateway with a surrounding wall, its height measureless.
> Inside its courtyard is terraced, the fine rest-houses arranged around its edge,
> And thick with all kinds of flowering trees – fine *bakula, nãgakusuma* and so on – like a vision.[64]

[60] Bloembergen 2006, 176.
[61] Bloembergen 2006, 195.
[62] Bosch 1926, 140.
[63] Bosch 1920, 6.
[64] Mpu Prapanca, 37.1.

FIG. 9 – Candi Kidal, 13th century, Malang District, East Java, andesite. Photo: author (May 2023).

More telling is another example of a description of King Hayam Wuruk's visit to a hermitage in the forest at Sagara:

> It was splendid and extraordinary, in the midst of the wooded mountains,
> its layout bewilderingly beautiful.[65]

And in the fifth stanza of this canto the poet continues:

> And ivory coconut-palms, yellow and low and bearing fruit, stood in the corners, creating a beautiful effect.[66]

And regarding the layout Prapanca describes the site in the sixth stanza in more detail:

> It would take too long to tell of the beauty of the forest hermitage that seemed like a vision.
> Its layout within and without was most awesome because the buildings were roofed with palm-fibre, (…)"[67]

These testimonials would not have been purely from an exclusive poet's eye, but the location of a temple in the landscape must also have been considered by the original builders. It is known from ancient Indian architectural treatises that great importance was attached to the orientation of a temple, for instance.[68] However, it is unclear whether such treatises, which were often handed down fragmentarily anyway, were also known in Java during the time of Majapahit, and whether they indeed have had an influence. Javanese Hindu temple architecture at the time of Majapahit differed significantly from that of India, but as Soekmono argues, also from earlier Javanese temple architecture, it can be deduced that Indian temple architecture has not been copied one on one to Java.[69]

Local responses

What comes to the fore in the Nagarakertagama is that in the time of Majapahit, temples were able to impress the viewer in more than religious ways but were also considered for their beauty and scenic qualities.[70] Regarding the reception of this heritage by the Javanese population in the twentieth century it can at least be concluded, as discussed above, that it enjoyed interest and as such this heritage could serve as an educational resource such as the Archaeological Service envisioned it. The reports in the quarterly Archaeological Survey from the 1910s and 1920s testify to the popularity of heritage sites and museums among the population. As such, it can be argued that the Service's restoration policy was at least partially successful. However, the Surveys also reported many anecdotes which testify of a different kind

[65] Mpu Prapanca, 32.2.
[66] Mpu Prapanca, 32.5.
[67] Mpu Prapanca, 32.6.
[68] Chakrabarti 1999, 1-2.
[69] Soekmono 1992, 68.
[70] Some restraint should be exercised about the extent to which conceptions of beauty from Majapahit in 1365 can be translated to conceptions of beauty in the twentieth century. Moreover, the text comes from Old Javanese in English and Dutch translation. Where Robson opts for "beauty" in canto 32.6, Kern uses the Dutch "bekoorlijkheid", which means "charm" in English. See Robson 1995, 47 and Kern 1919, 84.

of local engagement with heritage sites and objects; one, that from the perspective of preservation was considered highly problematic. Temples were also damaged, objects were often stolen or destroyed, something which Europeans of course had been actively engaged in. However, the kind of engagement from the local population that led to damage and sometimes even destruction, should be considered as having different motives. It often concerned cases in which those heritage sites and objects had a special meaning which might have been partly rooted in its original religious meaning, but not necessarily. Daily religious practice on Java should be considered syncretic, in the sense that elements from the early Buddhist-Hindu past, but especially elements from the complex and widespread belief system in natural and ancestral spirits, resonate through daily Islamic religious practice. Within this belief system, ancient temples can be considered as sites where spirits reside.[71] If a change or disturbance takes place at such a site without a form of ritual consultation, for instance, a *slametan*, a ritual meal in which both the spirits as well as the community are involved, there could be serious consequences for people, such as illnesses or other unfortunate occurrences.[72]

In 1915 a hole in a wall of an underground room that threatened the collapse of Candi Tegowangi had to be closed because the hole brought the danger of the collapse of the temple (FIG. 10). When engineer P.J. Perquin returned a few days after the closure of the hole to inspect the temple, he noticed the wall had been re-opened. After consulting the local superintendent, it appeared that in the nearby village sixteen people had gone mad and four people had died. These events were related by the local people to the closing of the hole which had also meant they felt separated from what they called their "home".[73] The same thing happened a year later when the local superintendent linked a local outbreak of plague to the closing of the hole a year earlier.[74] These anecdotes show that for the local population temple ruins were not just silent witnesses of a distant past, but places that still emanate a power associated with spirits and ancestors. Dutch archaeologists were aware of this, but apparently it was not always possible to take the correct ritual measures for the population before interventions could take place at these spiritually charged places.[75]

A special case in this regard concerns the case of destruction, or rather an attempted destruction, that was introduced at the beginning of this article, and which concerned a statue group that was allegedly found by a rice farmer on his land. According to Bosch the statue had been destroyed after the landowner had experienced that misfortune, such as disease and death, had hit those people that had come too close to the statue (FIG. 1).[76]

This statue group is currently on display at the Trowulan museum in East Java and is known as a Camundi: a manifestation of the Hindu goddess Durga (FIG. 11). The fragments were found in 1927 near Ardimulyo, north of Singosari. It is possible that the farmer acted

[71] Geertz 1976, 19-21; 23-25.

[72] About the slametan ritual see Geertz 1976, 11-15. Dutch archeologists understood a slametan was sometimes necessary before an actual intervention at a temple site, such as a repair, was possible. See for instance Perquin 1917, 26. See Bosch 1924, 103, about the excavation of Candi Agung on the Kalimantan island which could not take place before a slametan was organized to remove objections from the local people who believed that disturbance of the temple site would bring misfortune to those involved in the disturbance.

[73] Perquin 1915, 106.

[74] Bosch 1916, 100. It turned out that the supervisor had done this because he apparently did not feel heard in this case a year earlier and still felt it necessary to stir up the population. See also Crucq 2022, 114.

[75] Bosch 1916, 47.

[76] Bosch 1928, 27.

FIG. 10 – Candi Tegowangi, ca. 1400, Kediri district, East Java, andesite. Photo: ESCapade. Creative Commons Share-Alike 3.0.

FIG. 11 – Camundi Statue, AD 1292 (restored in 1927), Trowulan Museum, East Java, 1.41 x 1.23. The figure right in the group is known as Bhairawa and is standing on skulls. In figure 1, a fragment can be seen of its feet on the skulls. Photo: author (May 2023).

out of fear when he smashed the statue to pieces with a sledgehammer. Perquin assumed that the fragments of the statue were left on the field and not removed out of fear too, which indicates that the negative agency of the statue could apparently not be completely defeated.[77] Natascha Reichle has compared this case with other accounts of destruction of images of Gods such as on Sumatra, which she clarifies from the perspective of liberation and/ or purification when the connection to an earlier god and/ or culture was broken for reasons of cultural change. Reichle, for instance, mentions the Batak people on Sumatra who destroyed images of the fearsome local god Heruka. However, she explains that some fear for the former god's gruesomeness can keep on resonating despite the changed cultural circumstances.[78] These are just two examples from the last century, and there are many more, showing that the spiritual meaning of heritage can sometimes clash with heritage preservation interests. Nevertheless, the popularity of temples and museums at the same time shows the two can go together. A photo, taken somewhere between 1925 and 1936, of a man who apparently has taken place in prayer before an old Hindu statue in the Mojokerto museum, exemplifies this (FIG. 12).

FIG. 12 – Anonymous, Man brings an offer to a Javanese Hindu statue at the museum of Mojokerto, 1925-1936, gelatine silver print, 14 x 9,6 cm. Collection Tropenmuseum Amsterdam. Inv. Nr. TM-60047222.

[77] Bosch 1928, 27.
[78] Reichle 2007, 161.

FIG. 13 – Man tapping water from Candi Jolotundo, Candi Jolotundo, AD 977, Mojokerto district, East Java, andesite. Photo: author (May 2023).

Even today, sacrifices are still made in Java at temples and statues. Everyday people are bathing at Candi Jolotundo and tap water that is not only very clean but also has spiritual significance (FIG. 13). According to Hindu legend, the water of the Mount Penanggungan where the Candi and the source is located, is said to be an elixir of immortality and, moreover, that it revives the spirits of the ancestors of the Javanese Hindu kings.[79]

Another well at the other side of Mount Penanggungan is located at Candi Belahan, where old Javanese rituals are still performed. Two statues representing Lakshmi and Shri are hung with wreaths of flowers and incense is burned and flower petals are sprinkled in the pond before them (FIG. 14).[80]

Also, for the Joko Dolog statue in Surabaya, which is said to be an apotheosis of King Kertanagara, the Singhasari King who would have also been the founder of Surabaya, incense is burned daily, and fruit is offered.[81] Furthermore, the statue is hung with robes and wreaths (FIG. 15).

[79] Kinney 2003, 54. According to legend, this mountain also represents the cosmic Mount Meru.
[80] Lakshmi and Shri are "(…) different aspects of the goddesses of wealth and fertility, (…)". Kinney 2003, 64.
[81] See Reichle 2007, 23-24, 47.

FIG. 14 – Candi Belahan, CE 1049, Pasuruan district, East Java, brick and andesite (statues), height statues left 2,02 m and right 2,10 m. Photo: author (May 2023).

FIG. 15 – Joko Dolog, CE 1289, Jalan Taman Apsari, Surabaya, East Java, h. 1,80 m., Photo: author (May 2023).

FIG. 16 – Banana leaves tub with offering in front of a piece of textiles with parang rusak pattern in batik, Museum Keraton Yogyakarta, Yogyakarta, Central Java, Photo: author (May 2023).

In general, at many temples, offerings are still made to images, even in empty niches from which the original figure has disappeared. In museums sometimes trays of folded banana leaves can be found, containing flower petals or herbs, next to important objects such as with an important piece of textiles containing a significant batik pattern in the museum of the Keraton in Yogyakarta (FIG. 16).

The above examples show that there are different perspectives on the use and significance of heritage sites and objects that are each aesthetically, culturally, politically and spiritually

informed. From the Dutch and thus European perspective of the early twentieth century, the cultural heritage of Java needed to be maintained for its heirs. Therefore, it was important that temple ruins were restored and reconstructed. In this process the lay-out of the temple or the temple complex within its surroundings played a significant role as it contributed to the potential of the site to impress the viewer; the latter being motivated by implicit political concerns too. It has become clear that the importance of preserving temples for posterity had also already been engaged with by King Hayam Wuruk in the days of the Majapahit empire, and that, judging by Prapanca's words, aesthetic considerations must have played a role in this too.

However, when taking the perspective of the Javanese people of the twentieth century into account, it appears that over centuries, temples and objects that belong to Java's cultural history had gained a new and different function and meaning. Even without being restored, temple ruins, in their state of collapse, being overgrown with tropical forest, had become places where spirits could reside. Since the spiritual world of Java parallels the social[82], disturbance of the spirits cannot take place without ritual consultation. As opposed to the preservation and maintenance of the material remains of the past, this attitude testifies of what perhaps can be regarded as a kind of acceptance of the decay of material things. This decay does not necessarily have to come at the cost of spiritual significance. On the contrary, perhaps some of those attitudes to heritage sites should be considered as a kind of moving along with the ultimate inevitable process of transience. And, when misfortune struck and it appeared to be too late for a ritual incantation, deliberate destruction appears to be a valid option too, such as was the case with the Camundi statue.

Today it seems that the materially, historically, and scientifically informed care of heritage does not exclude the spiritual relationships. With post-war Indonesian directors such as Soekmono, the ideas about scientifically sound restoration, as expressed by Krom more than a century ago, have influenced the policy of the Indonesian successor to the Archaeological Service, today known as the Pusit Penilitian Arkeologi Nasional.[83] The large temples such as Borobudur, but also the extensive complex at Prambanan, are still examples of temples that 'make an impression' and, apart from being visited by the Javanese population, have become tourist destinations attracting a worldwide audience. Both sites became recognised as World Heritage by UNESCO in 1991.[84]

At the same time sacrifices are still being made at temples and at statues or objects in museums by a population that is largely Muslim, but for whom ancestor worship and belief in spirits have remained an important aspect of their culture, yet the spiritual relationship today seems to be expressed in ways that to a much lesser extent harm those objects.

Despite all kinds of political and cultural upheavals that may or may not benefit heritage policy, the danger of volcanic activity on Java of course remains. However, dangers have been added that to a far lesser extent were a concern a hundred years ago. From the perspective of preservation, the tropical climate of Java has never been ideal, but climate change poses a new threat, especially in low-lying coastal areas, such as the capital of Jakarta, which are confronted with floodings on a regular basis. In Jakarta, this could mainly affect the

[82] Geertz 1976, 28-29.
[83] See arkenas.kemdikbud.go.id. Accessed 2 July 2023.
[84] See whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/id. Accessed 2 July 2023.

Dutch colonial heritage in the form of public buildings and residential houses, as well as the post-war buildings of a capital which rapidly grew into a vast metropolis. Of course, this may also affect all the objects which come from the various parts of the archipelago and have come to reside in museums. For example, in the Museum Nasional, the former building of the Bataviaasch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen, which houses Indonesia's main collection of Buddhist and Hindu statues, including the ones that returned due to restitution policy, and which were once collected by archaeologists in colonial times. In that light, the uncomfortable question again arises of what to preserve for posterity and what not. Under the pressure of such dangers and difficult challenges, the return of statues to their true home in the original temple niches in the higher areas of Central or Eastern Java, could even become conceivable. In the end, perhaps the most sensible and worthy solution.

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