

**Brumann, Christoph and David Berliner (eds.). 2016. *World Heritage on The Ground. Ethnographic Perspectives*. Oxford, New York: Berghahn Books. viii + 327 pp. Hb.: \$99.00/£62.00. ISBN: 9781785330919.**

This book examines how the global intersects with the local through the lens of UNESCO World Heritage sites. There are now over 1000 such sites across the world. Inscription as a World Heritage site brings places of natural and/or cultural importance into a global discourse on heritage, a discourse that may not always place the needs of the local community first, but nevertheless throws into sharp relief the problem of interconnections between the local community, the nation-state, and globalisation.

As the editors of this volume note (p. 6), in recent years the process of World Heritage inscription has come to emphasise social phenomena that mirror the anthropological understanding of ‘culture’. In other words, World Heritage has come to include not just the ‘great works’ of civilisation but also *local* understandings of places and practices. This represents a significant shift away from a Eurocentric emphasis on stone monuments to ‘also accommodate authentic use, spirit and feeling’ (p. 11). These developments thus mean that World Heritage sites become a significant focus for the study of how local cultures react to globalisation.

The eleven case studies in this book all emphasise non-European World Heritage sites, based on the rationale that the types of social impacts that most interest the authors are more intense outside Europe. The editors argue that in European countries, ‘World Heritage often adds only rather thin layers to long-established national conservation frameworks and decades- or even centuries-old local adaptations to a heritage regime’ (p. 14). While this point is generally well-taken, my research in both Europe and Japan has concluded that there is a greater diversity at work. In Europe, for example, the above argument probably holds for the Old City of Lyon, which became a World Heritage site in 1998, long after earlier conservation measures such as the 1962 Malraux Law. However, the argument is less appropriate for the Idrija mercury mine in Slovenia, which was inscribed in 2005 together with Almadén in Spain. Although the importance of Idrija as a historical site had long been recognised, it cannot be said that there was a substantial “heritage regime” there prior to the World Heritage process. In Japan, the 2013 inscription of Mount Fuji has added only rather thin layers of heritagisation to pre-existing discourse over that mountain. Despite these differences, however, there are certainly many shared issues relating to conservation *versus* community revitalisation in Lyon, Idrija, and Fujinomiya (a post-industrial city at the base of Mount Fuji), and the case studies in this book provide significant analyses of such issues.

While the Europe/non-Europe dichotomy may thus be over-stretched, the substantive chapters of this book all cover a wide range of problems relating to World Heritage ‘on the ground’. Five of the chapters deal with Southeast Asia and China, five with Africa, and one with Central America. The chapters are divided into three Parts titled *Cities*, *Archaeological Sites*, and *Cultural Landscapes*.

The first thing that strikes the reader is the very diverse nature of the case studies, and this diversity is reflected in quite different approaches to materials and methods. For example, while Chapter 2 by Charlotte Joy provides a very broad discussion of postco-

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lonial politics in Mali and how World Heritage sites there have been impacted by violent conflicts, Chapter 3 by Yujie Zhu discusses both national and local bureaucratic policies surrounding Lijiang in southwest China. A wide variety of theoretical approaches are also present here, including Manon Istasse's use of *émotions patrimoniales* (heritage emotions) in Chapter 1 and David Berliner's analysis of nostalgia in Chapter 4. While it is not possible in this review to provide an extended commentary on all of the chapters, one can say that the diversity of themes and approaches is successful in giving the reader much food for thought. Readers working on other areas of the world will find this volume stimulating even though few of the chapters are explicitly comparative.

The concluding chapter by co-editor Christoph Brumann uses his participant fieldwork in World Heritage committee meetings to ask: 'why are so few of the social situations at World Heritage sites discussed during [those] meetings' (p. 295)? Brumann concludes that there are four main structural factors at work: time limitations, budgetary constraints, the limited mandate of the World Heritage institutions that do not 'extend to present-day human communities and their activities' (p. 298), and (most importantly) the fact that the World Heritage convention is ratified by nation states, who thus become the primary actors in local heritage concerns. These problems are discussed in detail based on the agenda and debates at the 2012 World Heritage Committee meeting in St. Petersburg.

In conclusion, this volume makes a significant contribution to what the editors call 'a comprehensive understanding of the social environment of World Heritage properties' (p. 28) or what more simply might be called "World Heritage anthropology". This book will be an essential reference for anyone interested in World Heritage issues.

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