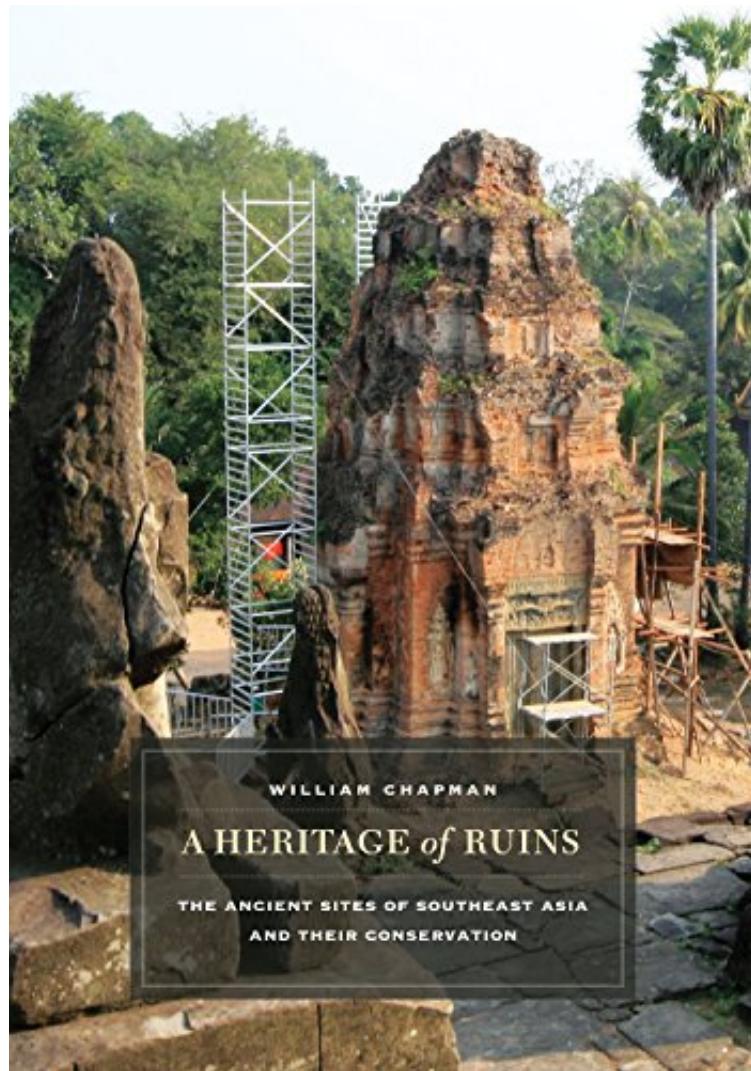


A Heritage of Ruins: The Ancient Sites of Southeast Asia and Their Conservation

William Chapman
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William Chapman : A Heritage of Ruins: The Ancient Sites of Southeast Asia and Their Conservation before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised A Heritage of Ruins: The Ancient Sites of Southeast Asia and Their Conservation:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. More for a specialistBy Marshall W GreenThis book is about the European "discovery" of major Southeast Asian ruin sites and their conservation since then. It has some informative sections on the people who built them but not really a lot. It is a parade of French, British and Dutch names of people who deciphered the writings, found the links with other cultures and then developed the sites until after the Second

World War, when Europeans either left or had severely diminished roles. I had hoped to read more about the sites themselves and, that being so, this book was not for me. 4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Splendid Adventure through SE Asia's Past
By design observerA superb collection of photos, illustrations, maps and expert text describing the extraordinary variety of structures, ruins and artifacts scattered across Vietnam, Cambodia, Thailand, Laos, Myanmar, Indonesia and Malaysia. Dr Chapman's explanation is scholarly, but very readable, and he comprehensively describes the historical movements that produced this surprisingly diverse heritage of sophisticated architecture, art and ornament. In the West, we're largely ignorant of the great Southeast Asian civilizations of the past in spite of the imposing monuments they left behind. Clearly someone powerful and ambitious created these structures, intending to be remembered. Their names aren't familiar but their works are astonishing. They achieved heights of power and technological achievement comparable to anything in the world at that time. Monuments celebrated the royalty along with a pantheon of divinities whose favor sanctioned the leaders who built them. Mystery surrounds the disappearance of these mighty kingdoms and the slide of their cultures from power into subsistence living. The photos and drawings in this book illustrate the steady progression of cultural development from the small, elemental structures of early history toward grand, expansive complexes composed of multiple structures that impress for their expressiveness, composition and sheer scale. Dr Chapman's book is a valuable contribution toward bridging the void in our understanding of the seminal cultures and events in Southeast Asia that produced such great advancements in art, technology and architecture. Today we recognize the power that they wielded that permitted them to produce the impressive structures still standing, and we wonder about the customs and culture of their creators. This book goes far toward illuminating the sources and motivations of these creators and it illustrates the imaginative, beautiful, transcendent results that they achieved. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. In Praise of William Chapman's "A Heritage of Ruins"
By Alastair KerrI am a professional/academic in heritage conservation and I have just returned from an extended travel through SE Asia. While there I looked for a good book on the heritage conservation of the incredible ruins in this part of the world but to no avail. Then I discovered William Chapman's "A Heritage of Ruins" on . It is everything I was looking for and more. For specialists and generalists alike who have an interest in the ruins in SE Asia this is a must have book. It is extremely well written and easy to read yet contains a wealth and breadth of information I have not seen in any other single publication. Chapman begins with a succinct overview of the region then chapter by chapter gives a synopsis of the rise and fall of these civilizations and how they have been conserved. As Chapman notes, conservation is at a crossroads from classical western approaches to ones which reflect more non-western thinking and without preferencing one or the other, he clearly narrates the multiple contested approaches in todays world of conservation. He has a deft handling of overview combined with detail which keeps the reader engrossed in what he has to say. For me it is brilliant piece of writing which is as instructive for the methodology and approach he uses as well as its content. It is dead easy for me to give this book a five-star rating.

The ancient ruins of Southeast Asia have long sparked curiosity and romance in the world's imagination. They appear in accounts of nineteenth-century French explorers, as props for Indiana Jones' adventures, and more recently as the scene of Lady Lara Croft's fantastical battle with the forces of evil. They have been featured in National Geographic magazine and serve as backdrops for popular television travel and reality shows. Now William Chapman's expansive new study explores the varied roles these monumental remains have played in the histories of Southeast Asia's modern nations. Based on more than fifteen years of travel, research, and visits to hundreds of ancient sites, *A Heritage of Ruins* shows the close connection between "ruins conservation" and both colonialism and nation building. It also demonstrates the profound impact of European-derived ideas of historic and aesthetic significance on ancient ruins and how these continue to color the management and presentation of sites in Southeast Asia today. Angkor, Pagan (Bagan), Borobudur, and Ayutthaya lie at the center of this cultural and architectural tour, but less visited sites, including Laos's stunning Vat Phu, the small temple platforms of Malaysia's Lembah Bujang Valley, the candi of the Dieng Plateau in Java, and the ruins of Mingun in Burma and Wiang Kum Kam near Chiang Mai in northern Thailand, are also discussed. All share a relative isolation from modern urban centers of population, sitting in park-like settings, serving as objects of tourism and as lynchpins for local and even national economies. Chapman argues that these sites also remain important to surrounding residents, both as a means of income and as continuing sources of spiritual meaning. He examines the complexities of heritage efforts in the context of present-day expectations by focusing on the roles of both outside and indigenous experts in conservation and management and on attempts by local populations to reclaim their patrimony and play a larger role in protection and interpretation. Tracing the history of interventions aimed at halting time's decay, Chapman provides a chronicle of conservation efforts over a century and a half, highlighting the significant part foreign expertise has played in the region and the ways that national programs have, in recent years, begun to break from earlier models. The book ends with suggestions for how Southeast Asian managers and officials might best protect their incomparable heritage of art and architecture and how this legacy might be preserved for future generations.

Overall, the book is a most valuable contribution to the comparative study of the material expressions of Southeast

Asian cultures, and specifically the history of conservation and the role and work of UNESCO, other international agencies, and local institutions in this endeavor. It is beautifully illustrated; there is a substantial bibliography and a helpful index. It will undoubtedly become an important reference work. Indeed, an abbreviated version of the book in a lighter, more easily carried paperback form would sell very well in the tourist and travel market in airport bookshops. Chapman manages to combine scholarship with an eye on the interests of a popular readership. I am delighted to have a copy on my bookshelf.-- "Anthropos" Overall, the book is a most valuable contribution to the comparative study of the material expressions of Southeast Asian cultures, and specifically the history of conservation and the role and work of UNESCO, other international agencies, and local institutions in this endeavor. It is beautifully illustrated; there is a substantial bibliography and a helpful index. It will undoubtedly become an important reference work. Indeed, an abbreviated version of the book in a lighter, more easily carried paperback form would sell very well in the tourist and travel market in airport bookshops. Chapman manages to combine scholarship with an eye on the interests of a popular readership. I am delighted to have a copy on my bookshelf. (Anthropos) This is a useful book in many respects. While full of history, each chapter follows a consistent, forward framework. For the uninitiated in heritage questions, the book requires little technical pre-knowledge yet introduces the reader to real and contemporary questions facing site managers and heritage practitioners, national governments and world bodies. With its rich history and thought provoking discussion, these issues should also concern the conscientious traveler when he or she next visits one of these awe-inspiring edifices of human civilization. (Akagawa Nasuko, The University of Western Australia)Of interest to archaeologists and conservationists working in Southeast Asia; should appeal widely to scholars pursuing research in the burgeoning world of heritage studies. Summing Up: Highly recommended. (E. R. Swenson, University of Toronto)William Chapman has produced a remarkably cogent and well balanced portrayal of an emblematic Southeast Asian building type?the monumental ruin. He impressively presents the full array of influences?natural context, social history, and heritage protection legislation?that shape the existence of these architectural remains, and comments eloquently and insightfully on how they influence those who experience them today. (John H. Stubbs, author of Time Honored: A Global View of Architectural Conservation, and director of the Preservation Studies program, Tulane University)