

## **Provenance of Knowledge and Ownership of the Past: My Heritage VS Your Heritage**

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What is the relationship between the provenance of knowledge and the people's appreciation of cultural heritage? Who owns the past from the point view of the local community?

Egyptian antiquities cannot be owned by individuals; rather it is the patrimony of the whole country – even the world - as a product of global cultural appreciation of the past. But how heritage and its provenance are connected in the eyes of the people and how it linked to ideas of identity, ownership and value?

Legally, antiquities in Egypt are under public ownership but there is significant chasm between what the public view as 'their' heritage in contrast to global perceptions of Egypt's heritage. People sometimes consider only the heritage of their own country as "their" heritage while everything out of their land belongs to the "others" heritage and therefore is not as necessary to value. It is even more challenging to foster appreciation for heritage that is not considered one's own; especially in a country which is very rich in heritage and archaeology such as Egypt. Even for some heritage professionals, there are many who appreciate Egyptian heritage more than the heritage of any other nation, as evidenced by the lack of non-Egyptian heritage in the museums of Egypt. There also remain divergent and even conflicting ideas regarding the ownership of the past.

This audience-based study discusses ideas of identity and ownership engaging to ideas around the provenance of knowledge and how it sometimes shapes the people's understanding of their "own" heritage.