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978-0-521-12257-3 - The Idea of Cultural Heritage, Revised Edition

Derek Gillman

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The Idea of Cultural Heritage

Revised Edition

The idea of cultural heritage has become widespread in many countries, justifying government regulation and providing the background to disputes over valuable works of art and architecture. In this book, Derek Gillman uses several well-known cases from Asia, Europe and the United States to review the competing claims that works of art belong either to a particular people and place, or, from a cosmopolitan perspective, to all of humankind. Noting the importance of cultural roles and narratives in shaping heritage, he looks at the ways in which the idea of heritage has been constructed. He focuses first on Britain and the writings of Edmund Burke and then on China and its medieval debate about the nature of “our culture”. Drawing on a range of sources, including the work of Ronald Dworkin, Will Kymlicka and Joseph Raz, Gillman relates debates about heritage to those in contemporary political philosophy and offers a liberal approach to moral claims and government regulation.

Derek Gillman is Executive Director and President of the Barnes Foundation. A former president of the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, deputy director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, and keeper of the Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, he is a member of the Association of Art Museum Directors and is currently President of the International Cultural Property Society.

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*In memory of my parents, Esther and Abraham Gillman,
and Stephen E. Weil*

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