Engaging Local Communities in Heritage Decision-Making: the Case of Gonies, Crete, Greece

Evangelos Kyriakidis
School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent
e.kyriakidis@kent.ac.uk

&

Aris Anagnostopoulos
School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent
a.anagnostopoulos@kent.ac.uk

Abstract

This article presents a community project developed through the 'Three Peak Sanctuaries of Central Crete' archaeological project in the village of Gonies in Crete, Greece. We propose that archaeological research should include community projects and involve locals in decision-making. We examine the limitations put on such community programs by state institutions and networks of power. We argue that archaeologists should be involved as experts through engaged long-term ethnographic research that precedes any archaeological or heritage investigation and enables them to understand the position of their research within instituted networks of power and knowledge. We make a case for local engagement that can alter the course of research towards more ethical and sustainable forms. And finally, we discuss the development of public outreach programs in collaboration with the communities themselves.

Keywords

Community Archaeology, Archaeological Ethnography, Public Archaeology, Heritage management, decision making, Crete

Author Details

Evangelos Kyriakidis is a Senior Lecturer in Aegean Prehistory at the University of Kent and Director of the Initiative for Heritage Conservation (www.inherity.org). He is a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London and of the Archaeological Society of Athens. Evangelos excavated the Philioremos Peak Sanctuary in 2011– 12 and has from 2011 instigated the Three Peak Sanctuaries ethnographic archaeological project. Correspondence to: Evangelos Kyriakidis, Classical & Archaeological Studies,

School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NF, UK. Email: E.Kyriakidis@kent.ac.uk

Aris Anagnostopoulos is a social anthropologist and historian. He has published extensively on public space, gender, and ethnic identities in early twentieth-century Crete. He has done fieldwork in a number of archaeological projects in Greece, and has developed a number of community projects. He has served as assistant director of the Irish Institute at Athens and is currently a fellow of the Initiative of Heritage Conservation and an honorary lecturer at the University of Kent, UK. Correspondence to: Aris Anagnostopoulos, Classical & Archaeological Studies, School of European Culture and Languages, University of Kent, Canterbury, Kent CT2 7NF, UK. Email: a.anagnostopoulos@kent.ac.uk

Community archaeology has a long and established history, and is well represented both in scholarly discussions and archaeological practice (Marshall 2002; Moser 2002; Tully 2007; Colwell-Chantaphonh & Ferguson 2008: 5-6; Byrne 2012: 26-7). However, scholarly discussion mostly refers to American or Australian case studies, or pertains to contexts where community archaeology has a more established pedigree, for instance in Great Britain. We have fewer reports or analyses of the prospects and limitations of community archaeology projects from other areas. The application of ideas and practices of community engagement to the case of Greece, in particular, has been part of some archaeological projects.[1] However, this engagement remains limited overall: the few critical readings of this shortcoming attribute it to the heavy-handedness of the state Archaeological Service and the resistance of its bureaucracy tonew participatory models (e.g. Sakellariadi 2010). . However, this does not provide us with the full picture of the issues involved in public archaeology programs that seek to engage with local or crossregional communities. Close observation and debate of community archaeologies are necessary to understand with some precision the scope of relevant programs in the Greek context. This article aims to contribute to the public archaeology debate in this direction.

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[1] See for example the work done by the Kalaureia Research Program in Poros (http://www.kalaureia.org/), the community research strand of the Argos Orestikon Project (http://argosorestikonproject.org/en/index.php/excavation-and-local-community), and the Koutroulou Magoula Archaeological and Archaeological Ethnography project (Hamilakis & Theou 2013).

As a norm, state-sanctioned public outreach programs in Greece are based on the educational model, in which the locals 'help' the program in order to 'learn' from it (cf. Holtorf 2007). It is assumed that in this way the locals will accept and adopt the program, thus promoting sustainability. It is also assumed that this engagement will attract the interest of visitors and increase turnover, and create a trickle-down effect of income from heritage tourism (see e.g. Tsaravopoulos & Fragkou 2013). The main problem with this approach is that community programs are understood as 'outreach' programs, in which heritage specialists, in this case archaeologists, retain control of the content and decision-making processes from beginning to end. It springs from an understanding of public archaeology as a 'toolkit' of techniques that can be applied to any community, in any historical and cultural setting. Furthermore, it envisions public archaeology (community archaeology in particular) as an occasion or instance of a method being 'applied' to a group or community, rather than as long-term research engagement.

This article examines the case study of a community project developed through the 'Three Peak Sanctuaries of Central Crete' archaeological project in the village of Gonies in Crete, Greece (Kyriakidis & Anagnostopoulos 2015, and see below). We propose that community programs should involve archaeologists as experts, and that their planning and execution should include the following parameters: a) engaged long-term ethnographic research, prior to any archaeological or heritage investigation; b) the implication of locals in decision-making processes, which may slant the direction of the research itself; c) the development of public outreach programs in collaboration with the communities themselves.

In our project, this long-term engagement is sustained through archaeological ethnography. Archaeological ethnography is a developing field in archaeology, with many examples already in place (e.g. Castañeda & Matthews 2008; Hollowell & Nicholas 2008; Hollowell & Mortensen 2009; Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos 2009; Hamilakis 2011). It involves long-term ethnographic research on site, which employs participant observation, interviews and focus groups as well as continuous engagement of locals in the research, presentation and dissemination of archaeological knowledge (Kyriakidis & Anagnostopoulos 2015). The rationale of embedded ethnographic research in such cases is that the content of the community action is created through collaborative research by the community, local and regional stakeholders and the research team. At the same time, this method allows the latter to "position the research" itself (Castañeda 2008) and understand its involvement with and impact on the local community.

The context of archaeological heritage in Greece

The importance of the remains of the ancient past for the constitution of the Greek national identity during the 19th century have been sufficiently highlighted in the relevant literature.

From its inception, Greek archaeology had shouldered the burden of providing, protecting and exhibiting the material evidence that would prove the continuity between ancient and modern Greeks and would legitimize the special place accorded to the Greek state among other civilized states in Europe and the world (Hamilakis 2007: 74-85; Morris 1994). Early approaches to the conservation and presentation of antiquities were thus limited by the role that archaeology played in the construction of national identity (Kotsakis 1991; Hamilakis & Yalouri 1996; Plantzos 2008). This central role resulted in two concurrent effects: the first was the overwhelming importance attributed to the Classical era, to the detriment of other historical epochs. This is for example evident in the decisions for the preservation of the Acropolis, where all evidence of buildings and additions more recent than the Classical era were removed and the place was actively rendered 'a Classical monument' (Hamilakis 2001).

The second effect was that the Archaeological Service became the sole purveyor of the protection and presentation of antiquities, regulating all aspects of the relation of the public to the remains of the ancient past. The importance of these remains to the constitution of the identity of the Greek state, made the relevant laws very strict, and allowed little room for initiatives that engaged local communities or the general public. The state Archaeological Service often sees local communities as a potential threat to ancient heritage that could lead to its destruction, looting or uncontrolled commercialization (Kokkou 1977: 72-78; Papaconstantinou 2003: 21-24; Fouseki 2008). Sakellariadi points out that the Archaeological Service is in fact a mechanism "disinheriting people from a resource protected in their name and at their financial expense" (Sakellariadi 2010: 518). Other writers also identify the limitations imposed by the heavy hand of the Service, its bureaucratic fixity and its monopoly of archaeological resource management (see e.g. Alexopoulos & Fouseki 2013; Tsaravopoulos & Fragou 2013).

Despite these shortcomings, there is an evident trend towards more inclusive public models, which is fuelled both by a change in academic archaeological discourse in Greece (Sakellariadi 2008) and pressures from several public bodies, organizations and groups – like citizen's groups struggling over control of public spaces in Athens (Hamilakis 2010; Stefanopoulos 2015). More and more museums and archaeological sites are reaching out to the public. Simultaneously, a number of archaeological projects place community engagement on their agenda, engaging in outreach aimed mostly at informing the public of their activity and research. Finally, a number of NGOs, including the Initiative for Heritage Conservation,[2] and other stakeholders turn to areas of cultural heritage either of minimal interest to the state or less regulated by archaeological legislation. Examples include the NGO Monumenta[3] and its work

[2] http://www.inherity.org/
[3] http://www.monumenta.org/index.php?lang=en

on Neoclassical buildings in Athens and industrial archaeology, or the Institute of Local History at Patras and its historical, ethnographic and archaeological research.[4]

The picture is complicated further by the increased links between the country's ancient heritage and the tourism industry. It is common for economic analysts to repeat the dictum of the late minister of culture, Melina Merkouri, that tourism is Greece's 'heavy industry', contributing nearly 10% of the country's GDP. Especially in areas like Crete, tourism contributes nearly 50% of the regional GDP.[5] It is still unclear in this context, however, how much heritage sites contribute to the overall influx of tourists and what role smaller sites play in the tourism industry specifically. Visitor turnout in archaeological sites is distributed unevenly, with five world heritage sites receiving over half of the visitors of all other sites in Greece combined.[6] For local and regional politicians, as well as other local stakeholders, archaeology is a major element in attracting tourism and therefore increasing local community income. Therefore, many archaeological community programs are coupled with efforts to generate income by visitors to benefit the local communities (e.g. Tsavaropoulos & Fragkou 2013). Community engagement is seen both as a remedy to the poor maintenance of extant archaeological sites due to lack of personnel and funds, and as leverage for local and regional sustainable development.

Most advocates of public involvement identify the tight control of archaeological sites by the state bureaucracy as the main obstacle to the realization of such plans. The state is legally responsible for the protection and conservation of archaeological sites and finds in Greece. Funding for sites is reserved usually for the preservation of architectural remains and the enhancement of archaeological sites with walls, paths, fences and related facilities (e.g. ticket houses and shops). Funding is usually one-off and not sustainable. State archaeology is reluctant to involve local communities as stewards of archaeological sites officially. Occasionally, close collaborations between local archaeological authorities and communities are possible thanks to the personal 'style' of regional administrators rather than official directives. Community archaeology is seen as a potential threat to the monopoly of archaeological practice by the Greek state (Sakellariadi 2010).

Additional obstacles to the implementation of local development through archaeology are highlighted in this paper. Putting aside the fact that public archaeology is often met with strong resistance from the

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[4] https://sites.google.com/site/instituteoflocalhistory/Home

[5] Published in a study by by SETE Intelligence (InSETE), the research department of the Greek Tourism Confederation
(http://www.insete.gr/portals/_default/Skins/Insete/meletes/Simasia_Tourismou_SETE_Intelligence_Report.pdf) last accessed 16 March 2017.

[6] According to a newsletter published by the Greek Statistical Authority (http://www.statistics.gr/documents/20181/b5150ff1-6838-4b17-b831-e1b2c764e4ec) last accessed 16 March 2017.

professional archaeological milieu and suspicion from the Archaeological Service, the participation of locals or other volunteers in excavations, preservation or heritage management programs is not panacea and cannot in itself ameliorate the poor state of many examples of heritage sites in Greece. Similarly, the implication of archaeological and historical heritage in local economies is more complex than advocates of heritage-based tourism typically assume. Creating a sustainable community archaeology program that is profitable in a variety of ways to benefit local communities, first and foremost necessitates a ground-up understanding of and involvement with local power relations and networks, rather than simply a good, top-down management plan. What is required is a deeper, more prolonged involvement of specialists, institutions and academics with local communities. Furthermore, local communities need to participate in the planning process, not just the execution, of public archaeology programs in order to ensure that the latter are tailored to the needs and capacities of local communities.

The project

The *Three Peak Sanctuaries of Central Crete* project is an archaeological project initiated by Kyriakidis in 2007. Its stated goal is to study the finds from three Minoan peak sanctuaries overlooking the area of mountainous Malevizi, in the northern slopes of Mount Ida (Psiloritis). Peak sanctuaries were important ritual centers on top of hills or mountains during Minoan times. They were usually open-air spaces, with several deposits of clay figurines and vessels, indications of animal sacrifices and ritual feasts. The three sanctuaries concerned are Pyrgos Tylissou, flanking the area to the north to northeast, Keria Gonies (usually known as Keria Krousonas, of which see more in what follows) to the east, and Philiorimos to the south (Fig.1). All three were discovered in earlier salvage excavations by archaeologists working for the Archaeological Service, after initial reports by local shepherds. Salvage excavations are usually quick affairs done by state archaeology with minimal funds, time and personnel. Archaeologists usually employ the services of locals as workmen. The finds are carted off to the storerooms of the service, and important ones may end up in the archaeological museum in Heraklion. Amassed evidence is scarcely studied in its totality, mainly because of the sheer volume of finds. The main insight leading to this project was that a study of existing material is more important at this point than the unearthing of further evidence. This is especially true for peak sanctuaries, which are exposed to the elements and human intervention for thousands of years; any systematic excavation in such sites does not render the level of accuracy that sites from other periods may yield (Fig.2).

(Insert figure 1 here)

(Insert figure 2 here)

From its earliest days, the project found itself entangled in complex territorial and social antagonisms that are characteristic of the area. When Kyriakidis first visited the peak sanctuary of Keria accompanied by a Service archaeologist, he was greeted by two very suspicious shepherds from Gonies. The accompanying archaeologist, originally from a neighboring village whose pastures are visible from the sanctuary, questioned the two shepherds of their presence on the peak sanctuary, implying that this is territory that belongs to his village. The shepherds became very incensed and responded sharply that this is Goniote territory and always has been. It is not unusual for archaeologists to have their work impact on already existing antagonisms, of which they are not and cannot be aware at the beginning of their project. Most archaeological projects, however, choose to navigate these shallows with a version of 'soft diplomacy' that is seen as protecting their work and scientific objectivity. This project sought to follow a different course of action, in incorporating these social antagonisms into its research, as part of its research subject but also as part of its engagement with the public.

We thus chose to see public archaeology not as a one-way communication between a team of archaeological experts and lay audiences, but as a field for the collaborative creation of knowledge and common decision-making on the course of the research and its impact on the local natural and social environment. It is important to stress that this choice was imposed by community control over the outlets we have chosen to make our work public (curated exhibitions, installations, social network posts). Our approach to this was decisively ethnographic. We implemented long-term ethnographic fieldwork, done by Aris Anagnostopoulos in the village of Gonies, to achieve a better understanding of the research setting, engage stakeholders, and position our research better within its social context. Several seasons of ethnographic fieldwork, which did not always coincide with archaeological research, were carried out. Simultaneously, the flows of people, resources and information in and out of the village were tracked, creating a field not restricted to the local; the local community is understood as one node in a network of power, knowledge distribution and value assignment (Marcus 1995). Archaeologists and anthropologists alike tend to conceptualize local communities, especially rural ones, as relatively isolated and external to networks of creation and distribution—especially in the era of 'fast capitalism', in which social media present ideal venues for the dissemination of work and produce new, global publics (Gupta & Ferguson 1997).

The village community

Most of our work is done in one of the largest villages in the area, Gonies Maleviziou, situated directly underneath the peak sanctuary of Philiorimos, and overlooking the area of study (Fig 3). Gonies is built upon an ancient settlement with possible Neolithic ties (Platon 1955: 567). Successive layers of habitation and expansion are evident in the spatial layout of the village. The place where Nikolaos Platon, a state archaeologist, discovered a Neolithic building and indications of proto-Minoan burials in the 1950s is preserved almost intact in the basement of a house. The village is mentioned in written sources from the Venetian occupation of the island. In the oldest core of the village, called *Archontika* (from *archontas*, lord) there are walls which locals believe are part of Venetian era buildings (Fig. 4). The village was probably a settlement for the land workers of the feudal lords of the area. Under the Ottoman occupation of the island, it had been a small village, of some 40 families at most, until the end of the nineteenth century, when a demographic boom began, leading it to become the largest mountainous village in the area, with just over 1,000 inhabitants after WW II.

(Place figure 3 here)

(Place figure 4 here)

Today, the site is a small village of some 180 inhabitants, in their majority over 60 years of age. Its inhabitants have experienced the traumatic depopulation of the community, rendered apart by economic and social forces that were beyond their control. The drop in agricultural prices in the 1960s forced many inhabitants, especially male, to migrate to cities of Europe, North America and Australia, some permanently. Others were forced to abandon cultivation and sheep herding to take up jobs as itinerant stone masons (the village already had a reputation of having quality stone workers). Within a generation, the village went from a thousand-strong booming community, to a near-deserted village of 200 elderly inhabitants. The village school had almost 300 pupils in the early 50s and eventually closed down in the 2000s because attendance was extremely low. Empty and collapsing houses in the village complete the picture of desolation and abandonment that perpetuate a feeling of despair among its inhabitants.

Where is the public?

Even in this relatively small place, the notion of community is much more complex than imagined at first. The spatial boundaries of the locality are by no means the limits of the community itself, and neither is the sum of local inhabitants representative of the sense of place, that unites a large number of geographically dispersed individuals. The place is an anchor that orientates the densities of movements and flows of people and information on a global scale. While most inhabitants of the village are elderly

people, there is a very lively community of Goniotes staying in the eastern suburbs of Heraklion, in Gazi and Amoudara, some 40 km down a winding and treacherous road. Their presence in the village is very strong. Some drive to the village almost every day, to visit family and attend to communal matters. Others spend weekends in their renovated village houses with their family. Younger generations are very active in the political life of the village, representing the community in decision-making centers in some distance from the village. Other descendants of village families now reside in other cities of Greece, or even abroad, especially the US, Canada and Australia. A significant number of these families visit the village annually, beginning on July 20th, with the celebration of Prophet Elias leading to the celebrations of the ascension of the Virgin Mary on August 15th. But they are also very active in the internet ramifications of the community, keeping a close eye on both the announcements of the village Cultural Association and the local newspapers, as well as the personal profiles of individuals on Facebook.

This dispersal may in the first place make understanding the community more difficult for the narrow understanding of a community archaeology that is 'in place' with groups fixed in space. Research itself, however, provided the instances in which this community came together through their active desire to exert its control on the course of the research itself. One of our first efforts to make our work known to the public was to set up a Facebook page for the project. In the description of the page, written one Sunday night, the peak sanctuary of Keria was marked as 'Keria Krousona', which is the way that it is known in archaeological nomenclature. By the next morning, the issue was already news, and the president of the Cultural Association was on the phone with both of us to clarify the issue. He was concerned that the scientific community described this peak sanctuary with the name of the neighboring village of Krousonas, whereas there were contracts that proved it belonged to Goniotes. He had apparently been notified by Facebook users in the US, who had seen our post at noon their time. The community, which our interlocutor represented, had realized that the publication of scientific outcomes entailed serious social impact on the livelihoods of the people of the community. In discussion with the archaeologist who excavated the sanctuary, we concurred that the denomination did not come from any study of territorial maps or legal contracts, but from the contingent fact that he approached the sanctuary from the road of Krousonas.[7] We promptly changed the name of the peak sanctuary to 'Keria Gonies' on the Facebook page, but changing the name of the place in scientific publications and official archives is a much more complex process.

Interacting with the local community: setting goals and demands

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[7] Antonis Vasilakis, personal communication with Aris Anagnostopoulos, June 2015.

The village community, both in its local and international form, approached the project with very clear aims and demands: their ultimate goal was to use heritage to regenerate the local community. As the president of the village put it: to bring people (back) to Gonies. This has a twofold sense: one is to aid younger people to return to the village and stay there permanently in order to counter the dwindling demographics, the other being bringing new people to Gonies, increasing interest in the community around the world, and invite tourists as potential sources of income. Our project was therefore turned from one where a specialist team addresses a general public, to one where the team collaborates with the village to define which public it addresses as well as decide the content and goals of the program to accommodate the knowledge and research demands of the community (Kyriakidis & Anagnostopoulos 2015).

One of the main realizations that ensued from ethnographic work early on was that the interest of the community was oriented more towards recent heritage in the area and less towards the Minoan past. The sporadic presence of archaeologists in the twentieth century, and discoveries of Minoan buildings and ritual places have been recorded in the local memory and constitute subjects of speculation and discussion. For example, the salvage excavation performed on Philiorimos by the late director of the Iraklion archaeological museum, Stylianos Alexiou, has left indelible marks in the memory of the locals and transformed the way they see the place itself. Alexiou's theory was that the peak sanctuary was a place for sacrifice (*thysiastirion*). Locals have adopted the idea that this is a particular space, one that hovers between ritual sanctity and the profanity of animal slaughter—which is something most of them have been involved in one capacity or another throughout their lives. A village committee has built a church for Prophet Elias adjacent to the sanctuary. The name day of the prophet (July 20) is a significant date for the village diaspora. Descendants from village families gather on the hill top. In a ritual gesture, the shepherds of the area offer a lamb as a prize for the lottery tickets sold in support of the church (Fig. 5). The peak sanctuary is, for all intents and purposes, a communal space with only indirect links to its ancient past. Although it features very prominently in the memories of the village inhabitants (for example, hiding there to skip school classes and playing as kids or having taken refuge during the raids of Nazi troops in the valley), this is not on account of its Minoan past mostly. When we talked to members of the committee who decided to build the church at the site, they were apologetic for their decision: "we did not know that this was an important site, we were ignorant back then". The different approaches of locals towards the site show how stakeholder interests can produce different perceptual spaces, which, however, overlap phenomenologically in space. Our presence in the area as 'experts' (archaeologists and anthropologists) significantly highlighted the presence of the place and repositioned it in a local hierarchy of value.

(Insert figure 5 here)

Events from the last few centuries are more important for the formation of local identity. They are lively communal memories that feature very strongly in the stories Goniotes tell about themselves and the place they inhabit. A prevalent story about village lineages, for example, is that all Goniote families moved there from the valleys of Messara in central Crete, sometime in the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The reason usually offered for their migration is the murder of a Turk by an ancestor during the Ottoman occupation of the island. The genealogical memory of most villagers is indeed quite shallow: most genealogies can be traced back to the late nineteenth century at most, while many have forgotten the presence of their family in the area for much longer periods. Archival research that Aris Anagnostopoulos completed on the Venetian archives stored at the Vikelea Municipal Library in Heraklion revealed that one village family name was extant since at least the beginning of the seventeenth century. The living descendants of this family were surprised to hear that their lineage went so far back in time, since they themselves had accepted the usual narrative of a much later migration to the village, fleeing the vengeful Turks.

Accordingly, the heritage most valued in the village is recent: houses built by local builders in the nineteenth century, windmills and watermills operated until recent years by community members, village springs and communal ovens, shepherd's huts, places where significant battles took place. All this material evidence of embodied memory may at first glance seem irrelevant to a Minoan archaeologist, but it remains decisive in creating a sense of place and heritage value locally. That such value-making is not exclusively a local phenomenon, but reflects broader historical and social processes, is evident in the way that national narratives (e.g. Greek struggle to secede from the Ottoman empire) are made material in local spaces (Fig. 6).

(Place figure 6 here)

Initially the incongruence between local constellations of value and our expert perspective presented a conundrum in planning a project aiming to study Minoan ritual places. How to reconcile the goals of different stakeholders if their knowledge and aims are completely different? In many respects, the collaborative project realigned both the scope of the research project and that of local stakeholders. Through our community-oriented activities, we highlighted the importance of Minoan places and other ancient sites for the benefit of the village community and many of its seasonal visitors. Concurrently, our research goals were refined to address the particular interests of the community and connect it with modern heritage.

The politics of archaeology in Gonies

Proponents of ethical practice in archaeology frequently state that the aim of archaeology should be engagement and collaboration (Colwell-Chanthaphonh & Ferguson 2008; Atalay 2012:43). While this is indeed a salutary and ethical goal, it sometimes achieves the opposite effect as it disregards the desires and aims of local communities. In cases such as ours, where local community partners may not aim to be represented as equal, scientific partners ultimately (e.g. co-authoring publications etc.), our intent to do so may be profoundly ethical, but what interest is it to the locals when their demands lie elsewhere? In similar fashion, while we may be willing to give up the privilege of our scientific expertise in favor of communal knowledge production, local communities may conversely *demand* that we strengthen and exercise this distinction in favor of the village. This is indeed something we have experienced in our project: the local community asking us to become cultural ambassadors for them, in an effort to combat marginalization in the emerging 'market' of cultural/archaeological tourism in the area.

People, groups and institutions in the Cretan countryside have been receiving funds from European Union programs to support 'sustainable' agrotouristic development. These projects are coupled with building and restoration activity, premised on specific ideas about 'traditional' architecture and heritage (cf. Ray 2000; Karafolas 2010:78). The result is the proliferation of a specific notion of 'traditional', which is usually summarized in faux-stone walls, paved yards and village heirlooms hung on tavern walls. At the core of such initiatives is also a coupling of archaeological or heritage work with externally funded construction in order to create bigger opportunities for tourist development. The guiding rationale is increasing tourist 'access' to more remote areas outside of the usual resorts and provide alternative, more sustainable forms of tourism (e.g. hiking paths, heritage trails and small agrotouristic units). In this context, the demand of some stakeholders from Gonies to 'bring more people' to the area is phrased with these potential developments in sight. It is understood that European money can be used locally to put to effect touristic development through archaeological heritage, and all efforts to this end have to pass through the municipal and regional authorities.

In 2012 an excavation in Koupos, on the outskirts of the nearby village of Krousonas, brought to light a Late Minoan town. The discovery attracted media attention to Krousonas and the area of Malevyzi. Media discourses agreed that archaeological discoveries could promote local development. The mayor of Malevyzi, which incorporates Gonies, comes from a family in Krousonas. Under his direction, the municipality financially supported the excavations in cooperation with the 23rd Ephorate based in Heraklion by purchasing the land on which the excavation was conducted and paying for experts and

workers. In a TV interview, the mayor stated that this discovery and its promotion in international media would surely increase tourist visits to the area and end the isolation of his village.[8] The community of Krousonas, in keeping with a recent trend in Crete, organized at the time a 'revival' of the 'Minoan path' to Mount Ida, in cooperation with the municipality of Anogeia to the southwest of Gonies.[9] Minoan paths in Crete are mountain tracks. In the public imagination, they are supposed to have formed part of the mythical King Minos' itinerary to the top of the mountain, where he renewed his mandate and received laws from his father, Zeus, every 9 years. Different communities claim the 'original' path followed by King Minos. The particular path claimed by Krousonas connects the two major excavations of the area, that of Koupos and the one in Zominthos[10], thus selectively highlighting a particular approach and claiming the 'original' itinerary placing it in this area.[11] This trail completely bypasses Gonies, located between Krousonas and Anogeia. Gonies have disputed this itinerary and proposed an alternative route that brings the 'Minoan path' right through their village. Local amateur scholars have proposed alternative readings of the sources, mainly Plato's *Laws*, in a phenomenological fashion that connects features of the Gonies landscape with the itinerary mentioned in this ancient text.[12] Subsequently, they have seen our work and presence in the village as significant in strengthening their case for an (equally fictitious) Goniote path.

Our work is implicated in the struggle to define and protect communal lands in the context of large-scale development (whether touristic or industrial) as well. Land in the area is being transformed gradually from community-controlled to state-managed resource. In the last few years, the state has enforced the recording of privately controlled land into a land cadastre managed by a private company.[13] This recording has a final character and creates a number of issues for landowners, since property titles are

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[8] See the full feature at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BnyMWWU2lo, last accessed 29 February 2016.

[9] Communities in the plateau of Lasithi have in the past years created their own Minoan paths to Dikti cave, the mythical place of birth of Zeus. See for example *Patris* 2 August 2009, for the annual procession to the cave organized by the municipality of Lasithi.

[10] Zominthos is a small mountain plateau to the South of Gonies, near the village of Anogeia. The late Yannis Sakelarakis discovered there in the 1980s a Minoan settlement, which is dated to the Neopalatial period (c. 1700-1600 BCE).

[11] See for example http://minoistas.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post_09.html, last accessed 16 March 2017.

[12] It has been pointed recently that the old Ottoman road to Mount Ida, which is most definitely a continuation of older roads, and still exists in good condition over great expanses of land, more likely followed the original Minoan path to the top, or at least one of them, and is perhaps the best preserved specimen of such a path. This road hurdles over the mountain between Tylissos and the gorge of Gonies, leaving Krousonas to the east and heading directly to the valley where Gonies are situated. Locals seem convinced that this is indeed the true trajectory of the path, and recruit all authorities that claim this to be true to their cause.

[13] Ethniko Ktimatologio (Hellenic Cadastre) is a private company that has been set up by ministerial decree in 1995 (see decision 81706/6085/6-10-1995/Government Gazette 872B/19-10-1995), and later delimited by law 3481/2006. This is the first time in the history of the Greek state that land and informal means of its transfer are recorded in official archives (http://www.ktimatologio.gr/sites/en/aboutus/Pages/6PwCSkOZyozWeUix_EN.aspx, last accessed 16 March 2017).

demanded that usually do not exist, given that quite some land in the area is controlled through means such as usucaption in the distant past, or through private agreements. The process deepens the anxieties of locals, because it is understood as a protracted battle for the official ratification of community boundaries and community-controlled lands. Oral narratives testify that the protection of communal boundaries has been a matter of concern for at least two centuries, and serious fights have broken out over the control of land resources. One such story, corroborated by archival research, is the late-nineteenth century brawl over the spring of Sykia between Gonies and Korfes (a village to the east, right over the mountain range of Pentacheri), which was resolved in favor of Gonies.

The Gonies community witnesses constant attempts by neighboring communities to slowly erode 'their' boundaries between them and Gonies. These boundaries are not only connected with a sense of identity and pride of place, but also determine the extent of current pasture lands in a local economy that still depends heavily on sheep herding. Perhaps more important in a contemporary economic context are the repercussions of establishing boundaries on the distribution of wind farms, solar panels and water reservoirs near Gonies. The government is planning to turn large areas in central Crete into energy parks. A locale overlooking the Gonies gorge (*Sorós*) has been earmarked as a potential area for the development of private solar farms. According to the mandates issued, these private companies will be able to rent land for incredibly low prices, without much input by the local community. Other communities all over Crete are facing similar issues and respond negatively to such terms, which they see both as exploitative and detrimental for small-scale pastoralists and deleterious for traditional ways of life. Environmental organizations have identified the potential hazards for local ecosystems and communities as well.

State archaeology has played an important role in blocking these developments on the local level. If the Archaeological Service declares an area lies within an archaeologically protected zone, developments are stopped on their tracks. Local communities have taken this indirect route in their attempt to block such plans. In the case of Gonies, in particular, it became obvious to us quickly that we were seen as mediators to the Archaeological Service, in community efforts to declare village-controlled land archaeologically protected. Our presence was regarded as an opportunity to draw attention to the ancient heritage of the place, and subsequently turn the gaze of the Service towards it. Unbeknownst to us, we became party to a hot dispute that was both about the present and the ancient past of this place.[14] Our engagement with the

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[14] In an article written in 2012, the then municipal council member and former regional director of the public telecommunications company of Greece Yannis Markogiannakis, linked the history of Soros to the Minoan path, and claimed that its archaeological value should prevent any further development: http://www.patris.gr/articles/225060?PHPSESSID=tr8fa13k17ljrtpng9s5evvbb5#.VBqokpR_v4s, last accessed 16 March 2017.

past was deemed crucial to the community, but not in ways that anticipated from our academic perspective. Kyriakidis' work on the peak sanctuaries and Minoan city borders (Kyriakidis 2012) acquired new importance as 'evidence' in support of community efforts to protect its contemporary boundaries. Similarly, Aris Anagnostopoulos' archival and ethnographic work was seen as important in furnishing evidence in support of a communal sense of place and its preservation.

Concluding thoughts: decision making in community archaeology - processes and shortcomings

Embedding collective decision-making in ethnographic research is simultaneously a tool for public archaeology, an ethical commitment, and a process that generates quality research.

One of the obstacles in communal decision-making in the context of archaeological projects is their limited scope allowed by archaeological law, as discussed earlier. However, while local communities cannot decide the course of archaeological projects undertaken by the Service, certain aspects could be influenced by collective decisions. Smaller research projects not involving excavation can also produce research opportunities for communities. The *Three Peak Sanctuaries Project*, for example, decided on the course of its research in consultation with the local community. In particular, we gauged community interests in the form of public meetings and asked whether the community would have the will and resources to support an excavation and to what degree (e.g. by providing houses, manpower and resources). We tailored our work to the demands of good archaeological practice, as well as the capacities of the village itself. Therefore, our work focused on the study of finds from previous excavations and minimal excavation work in the sanctuary above the village.

In addition, we encouraged participation in heritage management and outreach content creation by the community. When archaeological work on Philiorimos was completed, we wanted to make an information board at the site. Instead of writing one ourselves, we called a village meeting during which the content was compiled by a cross-generational group of villagers. The main issue that came up in the meeting was the reluctance to take upon themselves what they considered a scientific endeavor and therefore outside of their purview. This reflected a deep-seated sense of hierarchy in knowledge production, which the locals are acutely aware of and try to find ways to put to their advantage. However, during the meeting these concerns were sidestepped, at least temporarily. The resulting text combined select archaeological findings of our research, as well as aspects of village culture highlighted by community participants. For example, the content connects stone masonry in the ancient sanctuary with the established stone-working tradition of the village. The ancient use of medicinal plants at the site is

paralleled by current medicinal plant use in the area. In this direction we avoided making the statement that there is direct continuity between the ancient Minoans and contemporary Cretans. We stressed the permanence of spatial and natural features underwriting cultural change throughout the history of the place. Features that histories of the place and archaeological works returns to again and again, as for example seprentinite deposits, the special green stone that is common to the place, and its uses throughout history. Thus, archaeological knowledge contributed by us was juxtaposed with current knowledge about and recent history of the village, and was imbued with a sense of place in which the community is better versed than we are.

This and other village meetings we held (from focus group to general assembly) remain our best means to open up content creation and project decision-making. Meetings are not only initiated by us; they are also called by the Cultural Association of the village, and the social workers in the elderly care center with whom we collaborate closely to meet the needs of this aging community. The latter organizes working groups to take up research and presentation topics about a particular aspect of village life, giving them more permanent structure than our focus groups. In 2014, for example, this center, the Cultural Association and our team organized a small group of elderly villagers to pool their knowledge on traditional medicinal plant usage. The aim of this initiative was to collect local lore about the location, characteristics and use of medicinal plants, record the information and present it to younger generations, and create a herb garden to serve as a model for future, sustainable commercial herbaria. Linked to our own research on medicinal plant use at the site of Philiorimos, this initiative was invaluable in the direction of archaeological interpretation, while offering a viable model for future community engagement. Village meetings are occasions for collaborative work, as evidenced in the examples discussed above. However, they are inseparable from ongoing ethnographic research and engagement in the village. Without the latter it is impossible to properly frame meetings, understand the import of what is being discussed, the power dynamics that they entail, or the impact of decisions made for the community at large.

Where does that leave us vis-a-vis our ethical commitment to the collective creation of archaeological knowledge? Our strategic decisions are based on ongoing consultation with the community. They are shaped year-by-year, in an open manner that allows stakeholders (including us) space to express their interest in the archaeological and heritage process, while at the same time taking into account restrictions imposed by outside agents on how projects and goals will materialize. Ethnographic work is crucial in this respect, because it allows the research team and those involved in ethnography to "position" the research in networks of power and knowledge creation (Castaneda 2008). For our part, we realize that from the moment we set foot on the area, we were always/already implicated in such networks that we are

not necessarily or immediately aware of. Research in itself permitted us to position ourselves in these networks and understand the degree to which we could contribute to a more socially relevant, community-controlled and 'democratic' process of knowledge production.

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