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## **Archaeological Ethnography, Heritage Management and Community Archaeology: a pragmatic approach from Crete.**

**Evangelos Kyriakidis and Aris Anagnostopoulos**

### **Abstract**

This article examines the introduction of archaeological ethnography as an approach to establish positioned research and bring context-specific and reflexive considerations into community archaeology projects. At the same time, it considers recent critiques of heritage management in archaeology and the role of archaeologists as experts in it and contends that smaller and less prominent sites exist in different contexts and pose different problems than large-scale projects usually addressed in the literature. We describe how the “Three Peak Sanctuaries of Central Crete” project investigating prehistoric Minoan ritual sites involves communities and stakeholders and what demands the latter pose on experts in the field. Archaeological work finds itself always already implicated in local development projects which create and reproduce power hierarchies. Archaeologists are therefore called to maintain their critical distance from official heritage discourses, as they are materialized in development programs, while at the same time engaging with local expectations and power struggles; they also have to critically address and position their own assumptions. We here use examples from our community archaeology project to propose that these goals can be reached through archaeological ethnographic fieldwork that should precede any archaeological project in order to inform its methodological decisions, engage stakeholders and collaboratively shape the management strategies of the heritage revealed.

**Keywords:** Heritage, Archaeological Ethnography, Archaeological Expertise, Community Archaeology, local development, Crete

From its inception as a response to indigenous movements, community archaeology has gradually gained institutional importance in archaeological projects internationally (cf. Colwell-Chantaphonh & Ferguson, 2008: 5-6; Watkins 2000). An increasing number of archaeological projects, in various contexts, have progressively started working *with* and *for* local communities, instead of studying them and writing *about* them (Wobst, 2005). Scholarly articles, reports and books have begun proliferating, and blueprints of good practice have been offered (e.g. Marshall, 2002; Moser, 2002; Tully, 2007). The notion of engaging non-academic audiences in the conduct of archaeological work may seem quite straightforward at first, but its practice reveals a bewildering variety of contexts, methods, and outcomes (Byrne, 2012: 26-7). This variety, which makes it hard to propose a unified method for community archaeology, springs not only from the different aims and methods of archaeological projects, but also from the bewildering variety of communities, groups, publics and stakeholders involved in the production and dissemination of archaeological knowledge (see e.g. Moshenska & Dhanjal, 2012; cf. Bartu 2000).

A course of action that may be valid in one setting may strengthen institutionalized hierarchies in another, or produce unexpectedly detrimental results for the groups involved, or the local environment. What is necessary in this respect is not a methodological blueprint, but an agreement on the contingency of social situations and values and a discussion of how research is placed in the field, in networks of stakeholders and interlocutors, and in instituted power networks. In this article, we argue for the introduction of archaeological ethnography in establishing positioned research, which brings context-specific, reflexive considerations into the planning and execution of community engagement projects. We examine how the 'Three Peak Sanctuaries of Central Crete' archaeological project, investigating prehistoric Minoan ritual sites, attempts to involve the permanent and seasonal inhabitants of the village of Gonies in central Crete more actively in archaeological research, in view to local sustainable development.

In the example we spell out below, the village community has imposed a shift of focus from a solely archaeological investigation towards local historical heritage as a whole (see Ardren 2002 and Wallace, 2005: 63 for comparative cases from Mexico and eastern Crete respectively). The very notion of heritage is itself a red flag for most critical archaeologists, who read in it a commodification of the remains of the past in modern capitalism (Silberman, 2007), or the exclusionary nature of official discourses on heritage (Waterton & Smith, 2009). While in theory this is a seemingly straightforward question, in practice the collusion of archaeology and heritage management, especially on a community level, becomes particularly complicated. We set out to do research with the community not solely as purveyors of archaeological knowledge, but also as active agents in an effort to level out social inequality and strengthen initiatives that seek social justice in the field (Brighton, 2011: 346). In a globalised capitalism, and especially in the context of the global economic crisis, this ethical commitment means that community projects will inevitably be involved in the management of heritage as a resource for places of archaeological interest – either of their own accord, or forced by already existing networks of circulation and consumption of archaeological knowledge and heritage. For all their inhibitions and criticism towards heritage as a concept, archaeologists and heritage experts are forced to intervene to achieve

better control by local communities, equal participation of all stakeholders, especially more marginal groups, and sustainable forms of tourism and preservation.

Critical literature on the collusion of capitalism, heritage management and archaeology focuses on large, highly visible sites that have a straightforward connection with world heritage (Bender, 1999; Castañeda, 1996, 2005; Joyce, 2003, 2005; Meskell, 2003, 2005; Ardren, 2004; Rowan & Baram, 2004; Duke, 2007; Yalouri, 2001). These are potent value-creating spaces that set the pace for heritage conservancy worldwide (cf. Labadi & Long, 2010). At the same time, community initiatives are usually developed as part of large-scale projects that have high stakes, good funding, and a clear view to heritage development. All the while these projects are embedded in larger issues that have very significant impact on the identities and livelihoods of local populations, especially in a post-colonial context (see e.g. Moser, et al., 2002).

While this critique is valid for larger projects, it however acquires a different meaning for smaller places, much lower in the hierarchy of archaeological sites (cf. Wallace 2005:58). For such places, the management of archaeological heritage or heritage in general sometimes becomes a last ditch effort at resisting resource depletion, population outpour and ecological disaster (Sakellariadi, 2010). We argue here that outside these 'high intensity' networks, heritage can be transformed into a tool for civic engagement and community work (Little, 2007). In our case, which we present in detail below, the aim of community regeneration through heritage management is the chief demand put to archaeologists by stakeholders and community members from the beginning of the project until this day. We use our material to claim that the particular social and historical context in which this specific heritage process takes place is more important in the achievement of equal participation and distribution than a programmatic case against heritage as handmaiden to capitalism.

Existing critiques of heritage also focus on its exclusionary nature, that privileges a partial version of history, based on the concerns and chronologies of official national archaeology, which Smith (2006) refers to as the Authorised Heritage Discourse (AHD), and prevents the participation of local communities and less powerful groups in the selection and creation of historical sites and narratives (see also Rowse, 2008). Much of this critique is justified and correct, and the role of archaeologists in defining and shaping policies, discourse and power structures that sustain this version of heritage has certainly been instrumental, especially in the case of Greece (see Hamilakis, 2007; Petrakos, 2013) and Crete in particular (Solomon, 2006: 175-7). However, it is important to see that most field archaeologists and heritage specialists in Greece today are restricted within a tightly state-regulated framework for both archaeological research and heritage preservation and management (see Alexopoulos & Fouseki, 2013; Sakellariadi, 2010). In this context, Crosby's hard-and-fast distinction between community-initiated projects and "externally devised" ones (Crosby, 2002: 363; see also Byrne, 2012: 27) cannot possibly apply, since no community-run projects are, at least at first glance, possible within the Greek legal framework.

At the same time, it should be stressed that archeologists are not always the agents of the imposition of the AHD upon unsuspecting local communities. The experience from Greece shows that it is often communities, groups and individuals – in theory marginalized from AHD – that forcefully and

persistently demand from the archaeologists a plagiarized version of the official heritage narratives. This brings to the paradoxical position, always in regards to the existing literature on the subject, that in certain cases it is the archaeologist and not the local community who actively inserts multiple temporal scales and marginalized sites and narratives in local notions of heritage – contrary to what e.g. Waterton & Smith (2009) would argue. To actively advocate for descendant communities in a postcolonial setting for example may be a deeply ethical stance of respect and social justice owed to indigenous populations; but to uncritically transfer this advocacy in a local community where the logic of descent has been promoted as an exclusionary ideology in nation-building processes becomes problematic (see Holtorf, 2009). Particularly in the Greek case, such a condescending approach would help essentialize claims to authenticity that are part of the ideological construction of national identity and forcefully excludes difference (Hamilakis & Anagnostopoulos, 2009: 81).<sup>1</sup>

In practice, the field archaeologist finds herself trapped between her critical distance from AHD and the demands of the local society she works in. Local approaches to heritage may incorporate a variety of somatic and experiential approaches that are worth noting, but may equally frequently be expressed as a desire to be re-incorporated into the hierarchy of archaeological importance that underpins the national narrative. We argue here therefore for a pragmatic, context-specific, ethnographically informed critical archaeology that retains its critical distance from official versions of heritage, however seeks to intervene in existing local disputes and participate in planning and execution of heritage management plans as a voice of scientific expertise in its particular field, and as advocate for positions that are underprivileged in AHD.

Such an approach must combine knowledge management in a collective way with the ability to position the research and the researcher (Castañeda, 2009), and build relationships that enable archaeological expertise to be of any use to the local community. We propose that archaeological ethnography leads to this sort of deep engagement and should be an integral part of archaeological research. The literature on archaeological ethnography is growing and we do not need to rehearse its arguments (see Castañeda & Matthews, 2008, Hamilakis, 2011, Hollowell & Nicholas, 2008, Hollowell & Mortensen, 2009). We give here a first outline of some of the issues that arise from the collusion of such an interdisciplinary space with on-the-ground practices and aims of communal heritage management. We focus more on the social-political aspects of heritage management on a local scale, as well as the historical depth of local engagement with archaeology, with an aim to show how archaeological ethnography may help researchers to navigate the complexities of on-site power networks with a view to sustainable community engagement. We therefore propose that the method and content of archaeological research on specific locales should be based on intensive ethnographic fieldwork that precedes the laying out of narrowly scientific archaeological research questions.

### ***The Three Peak Sanctuaries Project in Gonia***

The “three peak sanctuaries of central Crete” project is an archaeological project investigating the material discovered in older salvage excavations in three Minoan peak sanctuaries<sup>2</sup>: Philioremos-Gonia,

Keria-Gonies and Pyrgos-Tylissos that overlook the mountainous part of the province of Malevizi, south-east of Heraklion, in central Crete.<sup>3</sup> The project involved several years of post-excavation work, especially on pottery discovered in the sanctuaries, which allowed for a comparative perspective on the three sites. The sanctuaries are within 10 kilometres of each other and overlook a wide, rocky plateau, covered with pastures and cross-cut by narrow valleys with ample vegetation. The entire area was heavily grazed in the past, while the valleys were cultivated intensively, with cereals, legumes and fruit trees. Most lay fallow now, but village pastures are still in use by some villagers who keep flocks of sheep and goats. The project is based in the largest village in the area, Gonies, some 35 kilometres down the road connecting Heraklion, the capital city of the island, to the mountainous region of Mylopotamos, to the west of the village. Gonies lies on the foot of a hill called *Philioremos* that hosts one of the three peak sanctuaries studied.

The beginning of the project coincided with a season of ethnographic fieldwork, which involved initial consultation with local individuals and associations, to establish the social context in which the research was to be carried out, and understand what stakeholders expected from this research. In the years that followed, the archaeological team spent successive stints in the village, both in the summer but also in early autumn and late spring, conducting ethnographic interviews with crucial informants and establishing gatekeepers to the local community. The particular nature of Minoan peak sanctuaries, which are usually open spaces in visual communication with inhabited areas, called for this approach in order to establish essential knowledge about landscape transformations and potentialities, to gain a degree of local knowledge on the movement of populations and animals in the area, and profit from the deep memory of the inhabitants regarding environmental and landscape change in the area.

Ethnographic research however, was not simply a corollary of the archaeological project, but it was implemented in order to answer very specific questions about its research strategy. While two goals were set for the project, one to collect and compile ethnoarchaeological data for the vicinity and the other to understand the way locals perceived and interacted with the material remains of the past, the implication of locals in the research process decisively pushed it to the latter direction (for a similar case in Greece, see Stroulia 2014: 192). It soon became evident that our interlocutors in the village saw in archaeological interest in the area a potential for local development, and put a lot of weight in the publicity generated by archaeological finds as an agent for community regeneration. At the same time, however, their interest in Minoan archaeology was not as great as we would expect, so the project had to turn its attention and its research questions to more modern heritage, in order to make space for increased local involvement. In other words, we had to create interest in the archaeological resources of the area – or in fact build a ‘culture of responsibility’ for specific heritage sites, while at the same time deal with the occasions where archaeological knowledge was mustered for community politics. Simultaneously, the changing regional context of archaeology as a potential tourist attraction changed the position of locals towards their ancient past, although up to then they were mostly interested in their recent past.

This project may have been turned toward a different direction by community-driven decisions, however its inception as an archaeologically-focused project also imposed limitations on its scope and its engagement strategies. We aimed to investigate very closely the relationship of local population with

the remains of the ancient past, and for this reason, our investigation turned more surely towards the village of Gonies, that is located immediately below an important sanctuary in the area, that of Philioremos. At the same time, the now deserted area included between the sanctuaries has been in constant use by the community of Gonies at least since the early 15<sup>th</sup> century. While our investigation expanded towards more remote communities in the area, it decisively turned through our presence in the village into a full-fledged community engagement program with a single village community. While our presence through time has enabled us to establish relations of trust and build solid grounds for engaged ethnographic work, it has also implicated us strongly with local politics as will become evident in what follows.

### ***Why community regeneration?***

The long-standing goal of the ethnographic work in Gonies is twofold: to understand who are the main stakeholders, the groups and people that are willing to mobilise towards heritage management; and establish what the aims and motives of the community are, in the context of their needs as a (trans)local social group.

As we indicated, the goal of community regeneration was one of the main actual demands set by the locals. The village president, for example, a man in his late forties, who divides his time between Gazi and Gonies, tending to his flock of sheep, formed this as a statement: “we want new visitors to come to the village and we want its inhabitants to return to it - if archaeologists unearth what is there, we can accomplish that”. Gonies was a densely populated village of some 1136 permanent inhabitants in the early 1950s (Kingdom of Greece, 1951:28), with a very lively local economy based on pastoralism and agriculture, a primary school, a police station and several craft industries, coffee shops and small commercial shops. This population density was unprecedented for the village, but was unique for the surrounding area as well.<sup>1</sup> The post-war years saw a construction boom in the village, which almost doubled in size, as is evident from photographs and local narratives. Eventually, the collapse of agricultural prices and the after-effects of war famine forced a massive exodus towards the cities and abroad. During the sixties and seventies, a significant number of men, who are still active in the village, started working as itinerant stonemasons, especially in large hotels of eastern Crete. Similarly, women turned the weaving work they were customarily obliged to do as part of their dowry into a commercially-oriented enterprise, producing cloth and carpets for a burgeoning national tourist market. Itinerant work, as well as mass immigration of males, pushed down the percentage of marriages in the village, and precipitated a large demographic drop.<sup>4</sup> At the beginning of our project in 2007 it was inhabited by no more than 200 mostly elderly people.<sup>5</sup> Up to this day, there are few family-run dairy

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<sup>1</sup> Censuses at the beginning of the century put the number of inhabitants to around three hundred, which is the usual number for several other communities of the area (Kritiki Politeia, 1900; Nouchakis, 1903). The German occupying force made a village census in 1943, now stored in the community archive, that records 1011 people in total. In 1961, when the demographic increase has evidently stopped, Gonies is still one of the largest villages in the area, with some 1055 inhabitants, compared to 307 in Kamaraki, 503 in Astyraki, 1372 in Tylissos and 2548 in Anogeia (Kingdom of Greece, 1964). In 1972, the precipitous drop in population has begun, with Gonies having 794 inhabitants, compared to 184 in Kamaraki, 351 in Astyraki, 1167 in Tylissos and 2820 in Anogeia (Kingdom of Greece, 1972).

workshops or butcheries, three coffee shops, a gas station, and two very small shops with basic everyday necessities. The village has surprising lacks in basic produce, such as bread, which is brought in from nearby villages. It has also very sparse access to health services, with a doctor visiting once weekly, mostly to refresh medical prescriptions. The village school was finally closed in the early 2000s for lack of pupils.

In trying to establish the embodied relationship people have with the remains of the ancient past ethnographically, we discovered that the main memory narrative in the village is one of dissolution and dispersal. This has important repercussions for archaeological and heritage work on a series of points: Firstly, in understanding that while the remaining village inhabitants were faced with the traumatic experience of village devolution, the community itself is a much broader, and much more a resilient population group than expected. Descendants of village families reside in nearby Heraklion and other cities in Greece or worldwide. Especially those who live in Heraklion display a marked mobility between the village and the city, to the point that the life of the village happens not so much inside its confines, but on a notional axis between it and the families of descendants residing in Heraklion. Younger people may drive four or five times a week to the village, to visit family, tend to their fields and flocks, or simply just lay back and relax. Others visit less frequently, and families in Athens or farther away may visit only once, near the middle of August, during the long summer break around the church holiday of the Virgin Mary. For these people, heritage work in the village means to strengthen the memory of subsequent generations, and has the practical effect that it keeps this flow of people and resources that constitute the village after the effects of urbanization.

Secondly, it was crucial to understand how the narrative of village dissolution was indicative of a real feeling of exclusion from processes and power centers that have a direct impact on their livelihood. In terms of distance, they are truly very far away from resources, services and offices that could make their life easier, and feel disenfranchised and unable to take control of their own life. Many elderly people are left to their own devices, without help from social services, and descendants either living too far away, or nonexistent. During the winter months, access to the village becomes more dangerous, and there is an abiding sense of abandonment and solitude to the visitor, which is exacerbated for permanent inhabitants relying on the social networks of the village for their survival. The recent austerity measures imposed on Greece have only worsened the predicament of elderly pensioners: agricultural pensions have been reduced dramatically, while medicine provision by social services has narrowed down to only a few prescription medications. At the same time, additional property taxes have been levied in the past few years, which dry out the already meager income of retired villagers. Archaeology, in the sense of official archaeological interest in the area, is heavily implicated in this feeling of marginalization, in ways we are going to discuss in detail below

While this project was considered locally from the beginning as a potential economic boost for the village, it was however never seen as a direct benefactor. It was made clear from the start that this is a small-scale research project that will not funnel funds in for local development. Our ethical commitment to giving back to the community led us to consider ways of reimbursing the community for its resources, its hospitality and its time, either by giving small sums to individuals who provided shelter for us, or by donating small sums or equipment to the cultural association of the village or the community itself. Our



lack of funds was not the only consideration in this respect: we wanted to avoid establishing a form of economic dependency on our presence in the village, and instead propose ways to motivate the community to devise ways of inviting people and funds.

### ***Archaeology, development and memory in Gonia***

While in the past the sporadic archaeological presence in the village reflected the marginalization of the site, and the rather incongruous stance of the official state against mountain dwellers of central Crete (Herzfeld, 1988:23), in recent years, ancient heritage has been turned into a pylon for profit in the larger area, which puts pressures on the development of the region and again connects it with trans-national processes of European unification and commodification. To contextualize the sparseness of official archaeological presence in the village, it is necessary to look at the typical lack of funds and trained personnel in regional *efories* – the offices of the state archaeological service – in comparison with the exasperating number of tasks that they have to perform. State archaeologists often arrive in such villages called by the local authorities, or informed by other interlocutors with only a few days' time in their hands and minimal resources to carry out a quick excavation that will protect prominent sites from potential looting or destruction by public works. At the same time, this sparse archaeological presence has been worked into local narratives in a way that reveals the deep personal involvement in otherwise episodic archaeological projects.

Earlier archaeological presence in the village was very brief, but left a very vivid impression in the imagination of the inhabitants and influenced very strongly their sense of temporal scale and their sense of place. The 1966 excavation on the peak sanctuary of Philioremos by Stylianos Alexiou, then Ephor General of Crete and director of the Heraklion Museum, transformed the hilltop over the village from a commonly used space to an ancient sacred place. The finds of the excavation were never published or communicated to locals in any way, until the Three Peak Sanctuaries Project made it its explicit aim, in communication with Alexiou, to do so. However, the experience of excavation and the theory proposed by Alexiou, who believed that he found an altar in the sanctuary, influenced heavily the ways in which locals think about this place – as a place for sacrifices, a *thisiastirio*. Somatic memory is paramount in working such places into historical narratives of the village: elderly villagers remember playing there, rolling the stones of the walls down the slopes and hiding from their teachers or the village adults. Other memories recall Philioremos as a safe haven to which villagers resorted when they escaped the occupation Axis forces during WWII. Yet the presence and theories of Alexiou helped trigger memories of other prior instances of ritual performances, whereby old ladies from the village would incense and pray at the peak of the mountain.

The first remembered archaeological presence in the village was the salvage excavation performed in 1935 by the director of the Heraklion Archaeological Museum, Spyridon Marinatos in Sklavokampos, a riverbed below the village. During the opening of the modern road to the village, the remains of a large rectangular structure, which proved to be a very well preserved Minoan villa were unearthed. In the surrounding area, there are other indications of human presence, such as extensive stone floors and standing walls. This discovery, which today is visible on the roadside but affords limited access to visitors, was instrumental in turning the attention of village inhabitants to the antiquity of their place.

Many able-bodied villagers did compulsory work for the construction of this road and were present during the excavation. Some of them, now deceased, had worked for Marinatos in the excavation. This stone construction is often coupled in local narratives with the skill exhibited by local stonemasons in the creation of stone bridges that support the road – their durability and endurance in time are often compared with those of Minoan built remains.

While archaeological work in itself has functioned as a mnemonic device of either highlighting human activity in the area, as in Philioremos, or connecting the ancient remains of the past with modern corporeal techniques, as in the case of Sklavokambos, sporadic archaeological appearance has certainly resulted in a feeling of disempowerment and loss of control over local heritage, coupled with narratives of the decline and abandonment of the village which constitute the dominant cultural discourse. In 1954 a local purportedly discovered a suit of armor in the basement of his house, while he was digging to make a cellar. The Heraklion Archaeological Museum curator, Nicolaos Platon showed up to collect the finds, and was never heard from again by the villagers. Rumors started circulating in the village, that this was an artifact of incomparable antiquity. Descendants of the family in whose house the finds were discovered have purposefully looked in the Heraklion museum over the years, but were not able to locate it. Indeed, a brief research at the log-books of the museum turned nothing up, and the finds are probably lost somewhere in the storerooms of the museum. Platon, however, noted the discovery in a short report in 1955, wherein he describes the discovery of a thick-walled building, which he estimated to be Neolithic, and a copper dagger, which he dated to meso-Minoan times (Platon, 1955: 567). While this short reference may be of some importance to the archaeological team, it remained completely unknown to the village. The son of the person who discovered this dagger that in the course of the years became a suit of armor related this story with a prevalent sense of resignation, speaking about the ‘armor’ as something that should at least have been acknowledged as coming from the village. It has now become irretrievably lost, most importantly from the collective memory of the village, like most of its tangible and intangible heritage, which is in the process of perishing with the generations born before WW II.

The distance created between those inconsequential finds and the important finds from other places displayed in the archaeological museum of Heraklion, is rendered in spatial terms: the village is understood as an out-of-the way place, as part of the relatively ignored and underdeveloped area of “mountainous Malevizi”. The sparse presence of public authorities in the village, and the sparse services provided to its inhabitants are coupled with the distance created by the sporadic presence of archaeologists, and the relative absence of ‘important’ finds in the village. At the same time, the already forged link between the material remains of the past and the embodied memory of techniques and performances nearer to the present becomes problematic. The common assumption in the community is that if the archaeologists themselves do not value the importance of material remains, then the heritage of the village is similarly devalued, and the communal ties that sustain it are broken. A persistent demand is therefore formed, that archaeology will ‘bring people’ to the village. Local interlocutors, such as the village president or other village notables, often invite archaeologists – professional or amateur – to the village and show them potential sites with the expectation that increased archaeological interest will mean increased visibility for the village and increased influx of

tourists and a return of its inhabitants. The perceived indifference of archaeologists, which is read into their cautiousness in approaching potential sites of archaeological interest is tied in with local discourses of isolation, based on the mountainous position of Gonia and its distance from the capital.

This marginality is usually interpreted in the literature as reflecting a deep-seated anxiety to inscribe local places in the history of the Greek nation (e.g. Herzfeld, 1991; Stroulia & Sutton, 2009; Yalouri, 2001). A series of discourses are mustered to explain the perceived contrast between the 'closed', violent societies of the mountains with the 'open' and peaceful ones of the plains of Crete, which matches the perceived contrast between Cretans in general, as insubordinate people, with the authority of the national state at large (Herzfeld, 1988). These discourses bear significantly on the perception and narrativisation of historical time, and of course archaeology itself.

In the inception of strategies to assert the contribution of the village to national history, the concern of the villagers is not so much with the ancient past, but with more recent developments (cf. Nixon 2001:81). Goniaites nowadays know and accept that this is a place of deep antiquity, which was certainly inhabited in different periods since Neolithic times and draw a profound sense of pride from this. Most questions addressed to us have to do with the antiquity of the village, but also focus specifically on the antiquity of its name. The interest in the Minoan past per se, as it is shaped in the epistemological tradition of archaeologists, does not feature in the stories Goniaites tell about themselves. Conversely, there are very strong narratives of later in-migration, which is supported by stories about brigandage and revolt under Ottoman rule. The largest families in the village have foundational stories that relate to the displacement from another area of the island of the family head. Usually, this almost mythical personality had killed a 'Turk' and left for Gonia to avoid capture or retribution. For example one of the largest initiatives assumed recently by the village cultural association, with the support of the municipality, was to erect a statue to Michalis Vlachos, a legendary brigand (*Hainis*) who was born in Gonia in 1822. The importance of these foundational stories in the participation in a collective national identity that is based on traditions of insubordination and revolt (cf. Herzfeld, 1988:29-30), shift the focus of local narratives from accounts of descent and continuous presence to accounts of habitation of an ancient place.

In other words, and contrary to what is common in other parts of Greece, Goniaites do not claim to be descendants of ancient inhabitants of the village, at least not directly so. They feel however a deep sense of stewardship for the artifacts left by these earlier inhabitants. The development of this idea of stewardship can partly be attributed to a communal feeling of place as collectively owned and guarded from outside intruders; as archaeological sites develop in the area as resources for potential development, they are transformed to commonly held resources for the village, alongside pasturelands, rivers and modern heritage.

Stewardship of the ancient past, however, can also be seen as the effect that ethnographic research has on 'highlighting' the material remains of the past, and, perhaps more importantly, the embodied and narrative performances in which locals relate to them. Early on in our project, a few locals offered stories of childhood games with the "dolls" (*kouklakia*), meanings the Minoan figurines that were unearthed by the rain or grazing animals in Filioremos. These were seen as insignificant clay objects and

were usually destroyed during these games. The existence of similar figurines in museums at Heraklion and elsewhere may have alerted some villagers to these artifacts' archaeological significance, but it nevertheless produced defensive narratives based on discourses of ignorance and lack of education. "We did not know a thing back then" was the common apologetic response to our inquiries about their relationship with Minoan artefacts. During one of our public activities in the village in the summer of 2015, we involved the locals in the experimental construction of Minoan clay figurines. We also asked elderly people to reproduce for us the clay toys they would make as kids. This workshop evoked bodily memories of interacting with Minoan clay artefacts, and also highlighted their importance as archaeological evidence. We thus strove to shift the focus from discourses of archaeological knowledge, and the power discrepancies they produce, to embodied, affective notions of stewardship based on a communally perceived memory of place.

Ethnographic research, as engaged advocacy of communal interests, however, is not an action that happens in a political void. The sense of marginality and abandonment which plays into more encompassing anxieties about the communal identity of the village, clearly influences the attitudes towards and expectations of archaeological work in the area. In more recent years, archaeology has begun to feature more strongly in local development and politics, as we will discuss below; through this involvement, anxieties of belonging translate into an orchestrated effort to preserve community boundaries and a distinct sense of culture from the intrusion of neighboring communities, which implicates archaeological research even further.

### ***Archaeology, Territory and Local Development***

A few years ago, in 2012, the excavation in the position *Koupos*, in nearby Krousonas, brought to light a town inhabited from at least the end of the late Minoan era and until the Hellenistic years (possibly 1200 BC to 100 AD). This attracted an increasing degree of attention to the area of Malevizi, and brought forward discourses about development related to archaeological knowledge. The municipality of Malevizi funded the excavation project, supervised by the 23<sup>rd</sup> ephorate in Heraklion, and also purchased the land on which the excavation was conducted. This move was heralded as an innovative effort by the municipality, continuing the tradition of self-funded excavations in the area, which was initiated in 1980, by the then community of Krousonas funding the test trenches in the same area. In a TV interview, the Mayor of the Municipality of Malevizi, Kostas Mamoulakis, who is himself from Krousonas, made a series of indicative declarations: he connected the discovery with a rise in visits to the area, and connected the excavations with the work of broadening and re-paving the road connecting Heraklion with Krousonas and the area of Mountainous Malevizi. He said "until now, Krousonas was isolated" and expressed the opinion that the archaeological excavation would bring an end to this, especially with "the projection of the finds in international media".<sup>6</sup>

This coupling of infrastructural work, funded by the European Union, with archaeological knowledge and activity, as a synergy that ultimately leads to an appeal to international audiences as potential tourist visitors, connects local perceptions of archaeological knowledge and action with the material base of

economic development in the area. Access is central to the understanding of marginality, where paths and roads, old and new, become not only things to be desired as an end to marginalization, but also as ideological struggles over the control of resources. The community of Krousonas, at the time of the recommencement of the excavations in Koupos, organized a 'revival' of the 'Minoan road' to mount Ida, in cooperation with the municipality of Anogeia, which lies to the south-west of Gonies. This path ultimately aimed to connect the two major excavations of the area, that of Koupos and the one in Zominthos<sup>7</sup>, and claim that they were both stops in the trajectory of king Minos in his march to the top of mount Ida every nine years, to receive laws from his father Zeus and renew his kingship.<sup>8</sup>

It is obvious that there can be no close match between a largely fictional account of the trajectory and contemporary landscape features, however the dispute wages on, with the two communities – Krousonas and Anogeia - struggling to claim that the path went through their land. The inhabitants of Gonies have joined in this dispute, by proposing a third possible route that passes through their village.<sup>9</sup> While we, as expert archaeologists and anthropologists are persistently called by locals to weigh in with our scientific status in western academe, as many of our colleagues have been seen doing in the past for other sites, we have chosen a very different path. We begin with the ethnographically established understanding that at the foundation of these disputes over the ideological use of the past lays a deep understanding of it as resource of material development, and not only as a disputable truth claim. To establish a Minoan path that completely bypasses Gonies may be a matter that cannot ever be resolved in a scientifically satisfactory manner. What is important, however, is that, once established, it will direct people and resources towards a path that will bypass Gonies as a potential player in the heritage industry that will probably develop, to a certain degree, around this heritage space.

The control of land is a central feature in these disputes over the past, and the ancient past has been used as a weapon in the resistance of locals to the intrusion of new forms of exploitation and development. The area of *Sorós*, for example, which is a pasture land extending to the north and northwest of the Gonies Gorge has been earmarked by private companies as a potential area for the installation of solar panels. Locals see this development as a potentially destructive force for small, family-run farms that depend on the existence of large pasture lands to receive annual subsidies from the Greek state. The existence of whole areas covered with solar panels in adjacent municipalities has alarmed environmental organizations on the island, that have pointed out that, while this development may seem benign for the 'common good', it is potentially explosive for local ecosystems and local communities. Much of the discourse of resistance against the massive planned expropriation of land by big companies, is based on archaeological reasoning, pitting a historical narrative for continuous use of land to support preservation against attempts at big-scale development. People from Gonies who currently live and work in Heraklion, write articles in the local press in which they rehearse this argument<sup>10</sup>, while locals recruit the aid of sympathetic ears in the official archaeological service in order to impose archaeological preservation on the area, to protect it from being exploited in less benign ways. These local voices have employed our engagement with the past to make these discourses more publicly available, turning our public presentations of archaeological work in the area into discussions of the latest developments in this front, and decision-making bodies.

Finally, 'territorial' claims between villages and the countryside they control befit more to thriving classical city states than increasingly aging modern-day villages. The locals of Gonies see constant trespassing efforts from their southern neighbors of Anogeia as well as their eastern neighbors of Krousonas. They see a constant effort by both communities to slowly erode the borders between them and Gonies. These borders are particularly useful not only as they determine the extent of current pasturelands in a still largely livestock economy, but also could have much larger repercussions as the government's plans to install wind-farms around the island include large swathes of land in the area around Gonies. So both the peak sanctuary work (which is in one way work on Minoan borders, see Kyriakidis, 2012) but also our archival work where we discover old maps or references to pasturelands or areas of village exploitation become particularly relevant in local arguments against 'new' borders that are imposed from outside.

Our work is thus employed in unexpected ways by locals, and this is sometimes beyond the control of the archaeological team, as it is called to offer its expertise but also its institutional position to weigh in on the overseeing of communal boundaries. In one such occasion, we were invited as expert consultants in a meeting which brought all the heads of cultural associations from the villages of 'mountainous Malevizi' together to discuss a proposal by a well-known Goniote photographer to organize a ceremony based on 'ancient Greek' motifs. We were brought in as advisors to the content of the ceremony, which we dutifully did, putting special emphasis in toning down the most spectacular elements of the event, in favour of a more nuanced and more open-ended approach to the connections of the place to its ancient past.<sup>11</sup> We soon realized however, that, since the ceremony involved participation from all cultural associations but culminated in a torch-lit procession to the top of Philioremos, above Gonies, it was seen as a Goniote effort to exert cultural hegemony over the entire area. Despite pronouncements to the cultural unity of the mountainous area of Malevizi, the divisions between localist perceptions of place were deep. In this case, the perceived distance and power of archaeological expertise was an instrument that enabled us to keep a critical distance from the meeting, playing against both the expectations of Goniotes and the disbelief of their neighboring villages. This is the case also in the repeated pleas of local notables to excavate more sites in order to bring 'people in the village'; our answers are patient efforts to explain why this is not a wise move, because it would potentially destroy important archaeological evidence.

Our work therefore, and our role as experts in the village is always-already involved in (supra) local politics, and embedded in networks of power and distribution of resources that we are not able to influence, let alone transform wholesale. Archaeological expertise, for all its associations with a colonial form of knowledge can, under specific circumstances, function as a critical voice within power structures that influence more directly the lives of locals. What we can expect in this context is to use archaeological ethnography to enhance greater participation of marginalized groups and individuals in the production and management of archaeological knowledge, and to highlight aspects of material and cultural heritage that bypass these already established networks of signification, power and value to open avenues for alternative and more sustainable development.

### ***Issues of Community Participation***

This hierarchy of importance of archaeological sites created by networks of archaeological projects, local authorities, and European funding programs, institutes a politically charged field that directly influences archaeological research itself, by controlling access to material, funds and personnel. Most archaeological programs are well aware of similar limitations, which are more often than not treated as unwanted obstacles in the direction of research and are rarely addressed in research reports or monographs; they remain the unexamined, tacit element in the shaping of archaeological research and the social production of archaeological knowledge. Our effort from the beginning was to turn these conditions that shape archaeological research into socially visible and shared knowledge about the archaeological process. To do this, a different sort of engaged research was necessary, one that created the conditions for the emergence of social knowledge about the ancient past and evokes relations with the remains of this ancient past. Besides being a process of knowledge creation that enhanced archaeological explanation, ethnography was an integral part of our effort to involve as many people as possible in the management and dissemination of the knowledge created in their village. In fact, archaeological ethnography cannot be separated from this process, as it not only constitutes a solid ground for understanding the social conditioning of a 'site', but also is an ongoing self-reflexive process that positions the research project on shifting ground. In this respect, engaging in ethnographic research may open the question of what is considered preservation-worthy heritage in the village, and guide the team to directions that do not fall into its scientific interest as defined by the existing disciplinary boundaries. Even the most closed questions of archaeological interest may produce answers that are not 'archaeological' in the sense that scientific archaeology means the term.

During one of the many public meetings called to reach a decision on key aspects of heritage preservation and management in the village, we asked the question "What is Philioremos to you?" aiming to establish the values associated with the peak sanctuary, which was of great archaeological importance to us. The question, given from a 95-year old shepherd, was indicative: "it is everything; when we cut class we hid there, when the Nazis came to sack the village we flew there, when our mothers wanted to give us a beating we hid here, when the Ottomans were here we organized up there, Philioremos is our freedom, it is everything we have", and so on and so forth, without mentioning the antiquity of the place or its archaeological importance a single time. The deep antiquity of the place is very well known to this shepherd, as well as the other inhabitants of the place. But the experiential connection with a place of antiquity is mediated through the lived memory of everyday life, and not archaeology in its scientific or public forms. Most villagers remember using the sanctuary as a playground, rolling its wall stones downhill or smashing clay figurines after they used them as dolls. Faced with the archaeological value of these ancient remains, they are filled with regret for their "ignorance" as they put it: "well, people back then did not care so much about things like these, or even their own history, because they did not know; they only went to primary school up to third grade, if at all" says an 86-year old ex-builder, in a very common turn of phrase.

However, it is precisely this experiential relation with the place, which dresses it with living memories, that makes it so important for the community. It is also the pathway to this 'schooling' in the ways of archaeological science, in the respect that it motivates interest and produces a demand for visibility,

both of the finds of the archaeological process, as well as the process itself. When we first opened the facebook page of the project, we immediately received a call from the president of the cultural association of the village, who wanted to know whether the peak sanctuary of Keria is known in archaeological nomenclature as belonging to the neighboring village of Krousonas. “Keria is part of Gonies, we have papers to prove it”, he said. What is important in this exchange is not only the degree of control over the public aspect of archaeology that locals demand to have, but also a desire to control the effects of the archaeological process on the livelihoods of contemporaries.

Our response to this demand was to share the process of making leaflets and signs with the community, through open meetings where their contents were discussed. In one such meeting at the end of 2013 season, we wrote, together with people from the village and their descendants in Heraklion, the information board to the sanctuary of Philioremos. It was a well-attended meeting by both men and women. Initially there was some awkwardness in the attendees, who wanted us to choose what should be highlighted and what not – as the real ‘experts’. We on our part, made it clear that we will contribute archaeological knowledge, but the final content itself, as well as its connections with the heritage of the village in general, should be contributed by the people in the meeting. Our effort was to try to include in the signpost not so much archaeological data or information, but mostly evidence that showed the lived presence of this place in the life of the area. For example, we associated local livestock production in the area now to that of antiquity as there was significant evidence of animal husbandry in the material culture of the peak sanctuary. We connected both with the unique flora on the mountain and its proverbial medicinal properties until recently, without implying a direct link, but juxtaposing the two on the information board.

For most programs implementing some sort of community archaeology, however, the management of knowledge is not the only concern. They must also focus on the ways in which this knowledge is socially produced and disseminated. This is a political decision that is not always the prerogative of archaeologists or other experts to decide (Zimmerman, 2005: 285-6).

In this case, long-established political and cultural forces in the village have created unequal access and participation in common decisions, mostly along gender and family lines. Women, especially older ones, for example, are left out of important decisions concerning the village, which are deemed the realm of men. Ethnographic work puts emphasis on the local knowledge carried by these people, and may pay attention to the narratives and knowledge of individuals who are as a matter of fact marginalized in the village. For example, the knowledge of village women on herbal medicine and plant names is continuously brought to the fore through ethnographic research; the mediation of this knowledge through ‘expert’ networks, alters their position as knowing subjects in the village community, and may empower them to better their condition.

The issue we asked ourselves was how can ethnographic work turn this knowledge into a conduit for the empowerment of these groups. Open meetings were occasions where women stepped up front and could be heard, but they were only momentary events, that had no lasting aftereffect. It was evident that a deeper and much longer process was necessary if heritage management projects were to turn ethnographic research into a process of empowerment through collaboration.



From 2014, we implemented an archaeological ethnography summer school in the village, as part of our research. Students from the US, the UK, Spain and Greece were instructed in the methods and aims of archaeological ethnography and also actively participated in the research. The long-term goal of this summer school is to create a co-curated open air museum embedded in the village. The first steps we took were to collect narratives, personal accounts and memories and tie them to specific places, creating what we called a digital 'heritage map' of the village. From this repository, we chose, in consultation with various interlocutors in the village, a number of places that could feature in a printed version of the map, to be given as a handout to visitors and tourists. We aimed to get as much feedback as possible from local inhabitants, by printing a version of the map and distributing it widely in the village, collecting comments and reactions.

This map on a first level aimed to become a heritage instrument for the village, able to attract the few tourists that pass through it and prolong their stay in the village. However, it did more than that: it brought to question an established notion of heritage as a male-centred version of history that had to be connected with important historical landmarks, such as wars, or political personalities. It aimed to show that everyday life, and the unknown toil of reproductive labour could also be part of the heritage of a place. Indeed, heavily gendered places such as the village communal spring, which has been depicted in traditional accounts as a female space, or domestic wood ovens appeared on a par with strongly male places, such as the village windmill, and places where historical feats are supposed to have taken place. Some elderly men objected to these places being presented as part of the history of the village, probing long discussions on what is history and what is heritage. Women in their turn stepped forward and defended their versions of local history. They pointed out that what is called heritage in the village is in great part associated with female labor and domestic chores. They pointed to utensils and implements that are nowadays zealously preserved as part of family heirlooms and reminded us that they were held by women, and not men.

It is perhaps self-evident that an archaeological project cannot hope to change long-standing power relations or inequalities in knowledge production, ownership and dissemination. What it can hope, however, is to achieve 'molecular' alterations to the status of knowledge subjects in the place where it is working, and hand over the power of decision of the future of a heritage site to the people most affected by it.

In our work, we aim to create research 'situations' that provide new contexts for intersubjective dialogue and encourage participation. Working with existing institutions, power relations and hierarchies is in itself an exercise at politically situating the research project and the knowledge that ensues. As critical archaeology has in the recent past problematized the view of benign, scientifically integral projects that simply perform research in a locale, we should similarly problematize straightforward notions and claims of community representation in its political bodies and their relationship to expert knowledge. Archaeological ethnography enables us to proceed from good intentions to give back to the community that should form the basis of engaged archaeological projects to a pragmatic examination of what exactly a community wants from an archaeological project, and how it is set to get it (cf. Kamizis et al. 2010). Throughout this article, we have demonstrated how archaeological work is always already implicated in political projects that direct local development and

reproduce existing power hierarchies. For archaeological work to become relevant in this context, it is important to maintain its critical distance from versions of AHD, as they acquire material substance in development programs, local expectations and power struggles, and its own colonialist assumptions. But to do so, it must maintain archaeological ethnographic research as a continuous process of socially created knowledge that examines its position vis-à-vis a changing social background.

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<sup>1</sup> Critical discussions of the uses of archaeology in Greek nationalism show how it has formed a heritage management apparatus and educational machine that excludes all alternative narratives besides that which claims the continuity of Greeks from classical Greece (Hamilakis, 2007; Yalouri, 2001; see also Sakellariadi, 2010 for a short overview).

<sup>2</sup> Peak sanctuaries are Minoan cult sites of the rural type, best known for their (nowadays) remote location in the mountainous regions of Crete. Peak sanctuaries developed and flourished in the Middle Minoan period (c. 1750 BC) and most declined in the early years of the Late Minoan period (c. 1490 BC) when it is believed that rural cult was assimilated by the regime running more central Minoan settlements. Incidentally, Philioremos is amongst the few remaining active peak sanctuaries. Although few peak sanctuaries have been published to date, these sites are recognizable for a range of specific characteristics: their location in an elevated area which offers a good view of the surrounding landscape, including settlements or other peak sanctuaries; the presence of drinking and cooking vessels alongside small clay anthropomorphic and zoomorphic vessels; and occasionally, the presence of architectural remains.

<sup>3</sup> The area is a large part of the municipality, which is geographically framed by the steep mountain range that extends in a North to South fashion on the slopes of mount Psiloritis (Ida). Our archival work has shown that the villages in the area kept very strong commercial and social relationships throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. But it is mostly its geographical location that creates the sense of a distinct 'cultural area'. Even though it is not administratively autonomous or separate, the mountainous Malevizi is seen even by official eyes as a unique 'transitional zone' between the mountain geographies and cultures of Ida and the developed urbanism of the plains. See e.g. <http://www.akomm.gr/include/pdf.php?l=1&p=85>, last accessed 29 October 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Today, some forty men in the village, approximately one fourth of its population are unmarried. Their age group, between their fifties and sixties, testifies to this wave of out-migration in the sixties and seventies.

<sup>5</sup> The number is a rough estimate offered by the village authorities, based on recent census records. At the time of writing, we have already carried out a census of the permanent inhabitants of the village, in collaboration with the Heraklion Polytechnic, department of Social Work, which revealed that Gonies have 180 permanent inhabitants, 60% of which are over 65 years old. The population of the village fluctuates severely, with a peak during the summer months, and several younger individuals visiting their family several times a week and during weekends.

<sup>6</sup> See the full feature at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5BnyMWWU2lo>, last accessed 29 October 2014.

<sup>7</sup> 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 BC).

<sup>8</sup> The story of the ascent of Minos to the top of Psiloritis (Ida) resounded in Plato's *Laws*, where he described the ascent of three discussants to the top following a certain path. Minor descriptive elements of the work are used in a variety of public discourses to debate the trajectory of the path. See for example [http://minoistas.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post\\_09.html](http://minoistas.blogspot.gr/2012/05/blog-post_09.html), last accessed 29 October 2014.

<sup>9</sup> 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.

<sup>10</sup> See for example the article written by the then municipal council member and former regional director of the public telecommunications company of Greece Yannis Markogiannakis in the local newspaper *Patris*:

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[http://www.patris.gr/articles/225060?PHPSESSID=tr8fa13k17ljrtpng9s5evvbb5#.VBqokpR\\_v4s](http://www.patris.gr/articles/225060?PHPSESSID=tr8fa13k17ljrtpng9s5evvbb5#.VBqokpR_v4s), last accessed 29 October 2014.

<sup>11</sup> We insisted for example that the participants in the event should not wear togas, as the organizer proposed, because this reflected a highly stereotypical notion of antiquity, which furthermore was employed to convey a sense of 'authenticity' that was problematic in itself.

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