

# PART I



## CHAPTER I

# A Political Economy of Heritage and the Commons: A First Sketch Focusing on Greece

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The commons today constitute a hotly debated topic with wide research range spanning from the natural resources to social and digital goods. However, discussions on heritage as commons are limited, considered mostly as part of the state politics and economics agenda. This chapter attempts to provide an initial sketch of the emerging field of heritage commons, based on empirical work carried out by the author in Greece; a country at the forefront of the development of the ‘cultural property’ notion for heritage, currently negotiating the public texture of its monuments and cultural economy. Commenting on the state enclosure of the past and subsequent practices by other agencies within this appropriation, this chapter attempts to redefine heritage and its components, drawing on their social and economic values and the tripartite schema of the commons (resources, involved communities, regulatory frame) towards a more democratic governance perspective.

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**How to cite this book chapter:**

Lekakis, S. 2020. A Political Economy of Heritage and the Commons: A First Sketch Focusing on Greece. In Lekakis, S. (ed.) *Cultural Heritage in the Realm of the Commons: Conversations on the Case of Greece*. Pp. 17–44. London: Ubiquity Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/bcj.c>. License: CC-BY

## A political economy of heritage

### *The national appropriation of the past*

The concept of heritage goes hand in hand with the emergence of nation-states in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> c. Modernity and the complementary processes developing in Europe (urbanization, industrialization and their effects in social differentiation) changed long-standing views of the ‘familiar ruins’ – the remains of the past encountered in everyday life – as antiquity was distanced from the present and recast as ‘cultural heritage’; socially significant tangible and intangible remains that should be protected and studied to document the glory of the nation (Anderson 1991). Artifacts, buildings, landscapes and figures of the past were thus acknowledged as landmarks in an eclectic narrative, the national history, to be managed by public servants (i.e. archaeologists, historians, conservators, archivists), who were responsible to project national identity to the past and narrate the deeds of the newly-established collective political subject, the nation-state, through the centuries (Lekakis et al 2018).

In this way, nation-states enclosed areas of the past and appropriated them as cultural heritage; a body of tangible and intangible material, imbued with symbolic meaning of belonging, pride and exceptionalism of the nation; a public good, stewarded in a top-down way by the state services, for the benefit of all.

### *Cultural Property & Cultural Economy*

After the end of WWII, a number of intergovernmental organisations emerged in an attempt to bridge the gap left by the hostilities (UNESCO: 1945; ICOM: 1946; ICCROM: 1956; ICCROM 1959; ICOMOS: 1965). Their vision had a cultural horizon, implemented through the shared platform of ‘cultural policy’, an element of soft diplomacy aiming to establish good practice in heritage management across Europe and progressively organise the niche economic sector of ‘cultural economy’ with touristic and educational outputs. Main goal in this international network was the protection of and raising awareness for cultural heritage through ‘shared ownership’, attempting to introduce a common platform in heritage management and project inspirational feelings of unity and belonging onto a venerated, pre-war past, ‘for the benefit of humanity’. This narrative, mainly expressed and utilised through normative documents, featured for the first time in the preamble of the Hague Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict in 1954, where (national) heritage is considered as common “heritage of all mankind” (UNESCO 1954).<sup>4</sup> Again, in the Hague Convention, the concept of “cultural property” was introduced as a generic term to assert the national appropriation of heritage “irrespective

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<sup>4</sup> The concept was since reiterated to represent other entities, among others, the open sea, outer space and the human genome.

of origin or ownership” (UNESCO 1954: par.1). This concept of ‘cultural property of mankind, reiterated in the UNESCO World Heritage Convention, still remains a pivotal theme in European cultural policy and a recurring subject in intergovernmental documents that followed (UNESCO 1972; Council of Europe 2015; Council of the European Union 2014); As we have examined elsewhere (Lekakis 2012: 686–8), there is no antagonism between the national and the international heritage ownership schemes; heritage still remains under the jurisdiction of the individual state, while sharing with the ‘rest of the humanity’ is implied as a moral obligation, a field for scientific collaboration but also a touristic potential, an encouragement to visit each other’s monuments, promoted as finished and singular products for visitors’ consumption.

Thus, cohesively organized and managed in-house to document and propagate the national self but also a point of reference for the reconciliation and collaboration of the nations, heritage as ‘cultural property’ became an element for the tourism industry, establishing progressively the ‘cultural economy’ sector, already traceable after World War II (Hobsbawm & Ranger 1983; Urry 1990; Goodwin 2006; Bertacchini et al 2012; Lekakis 2013a: 108–118).

### *The economic horizon of heritage management*

The last three decades, however, have seen a new series of discussions on the economic horizon of heritage. The surfacing of neoliberal politics and the establishment of the New Public Management dogma in Europe, requiring adequate investment return in parallel to the shrinkage of state provisions, have highlighted the need to include cultural/heritage elements in the developmental plans in more productive ways than mere ‘outputs’ for tourism. Heritage is explored in these approaches, as a dynamic resource that can be measured, invested in and protected from exhaustion, an ‘input’ rather than an ‘output’, that can inform growth potentials, in the spectrum of sustainability; i.e. development that does not compromise natural resources or the social capital. In current narratives, culture is incremental in these schemata as a coordinating aspect that allows contextualization of tools and processes to promote productivity, competitiveness and effectiveness (Sørensen 2007: 75). In fact, UNESCO and the United Nations support the introduction of culture as the fourth circle in the sustainability Venn diagram (Nurse 2006).

To cater for this set up, support the translation of culture/heritage in the economic parlance, and better the distribution and dynamics of the goods, a number of formalistic models and accounting practices have been transferred from the business sector to cultural/heritage management (Power 1997; Shore & Wright 2000: 60; Clark 2006: 60). Heritage management, in general, involves tools and practices from business administration and the management of the natural environment, processed into a resource in the 1960s (Mason 1999; Throsby 2002). It is already a theoretically laden and politically, culturally and technically organised set of activities that can contribute in the further reification of

cultural heritage and its deliberation into a private good; for example, as an added value in a capital-driven gentrification scheme (Herzfeld 2010).

The ‘cultural capital’ modification is characteristic in this assortment. Through this, culture/heritage is considered as an input; a cumulatively homogeneous aggregation of tangible and intangible remains of the past and the relative cultural services, collectively taking into account its cultural and social values and the economic potential (Throsby 2001: 46). A homogeneous total that can work in parallel with the social and natural capital (Mason 1999: 12), managed through processes of valuation and valorization, that is fit for audit and accrual accounting and also has the potential to be consumed in terms of stock and flow (Throsby 2002: 102; Rizzo & Throsby 2006: 986). Heritage still remains a public good shared across the humanity (‘cultural property’), it is however manipulated to fit the framework of the market, inventing or highlighting properties that we normally encounter in private goods, such as rivalry, excludability and substitutability.

Challenging the trend, researchers have swiftly identified that heritage commonly resists accounting standards prescribed for other assets to satisfy conventional market metrics, as assessing the economic outcome of an investment (Hooper et al 2005). The public character of heritage holds values that cannot be easily measured or exchanged for fiscal and commercial gains. In the bibliography of cultural economics, these are described from a negative perspective, as ‘non-use values’: relational, nonmaterial benefits or positive externalities that people obtain from ecosystems and cultural systems through spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, reflection, recreation, aesthetic experience and other qualities and attributes that cannot be easily quantified in financial terms (MA 2005: 40; Hølleland et al. 2017: 212; Gerber & Hess 2017: 715). These are now the centre of the attention, manipulated to fit the “holistic impact” of heritage resources on the social and economic landscape (Bakhsi et al. 2015).

### *Following the ‘social turn’*

The last four decades have also witnessed a marked turn in the heritage management debate towards the social values of cultural heritage. This could be considered a result of several processes ongoing, for example political decolonisation, economic refocusing of development, and reflexive, post-modern criticism in social science research. Respective criticism on Europe-centred cultural concepts (for example, the ‘humanity’ ownership) formed cracks in the national appropriation of monuments and raised the 1980s question of ‘who owns heritage’ (Lekakis 2012). Despite the abundant bibliography, the enquiry led to a dead-end. Arguments developed, however, allowed us to consider the public in a plural and inclusive form and track the emergence of hybrid disciplines around heritage, such as ‘public archaeology’ and ‘cultural

communication' that acknowledged the stake of the non-expert communities and sought methods to understand their views and collaborate towards a more inclusive present in heritage management (Schadla-Hall et al. 2010; Lekakis et al 2018: 3).

This 'social turn' acknowledged widely (Council of Europe 2000; European Commission 2008; Council of Europe 2005), is nowadays considered to have limited success and pay lip-service to effective inclusion and participatory processes. A frequent argument relates this trend again to the repercussions of New Public Management; Managerialism requires public sector entities to be as effective and efficient as their private sector counterparts, covering the social responsibility and respecting tax-payers' money to revert the liability character of heritage assets. Public choice is thus seen as an overarching strategy, guiding the attempts to generate economic benefit by materializing values and services embodied in the 'asset' (Hooper et al. 2005: 420). The public is thus taken into account, however shallowly considered either as tax-payers or customers/tourists for whom heritage should be managed. A mindset that further reinforces the economic appraisal of heritage but also leaves social needs unaddressed; Results, currently observable around Europe, can be considered a far cry from democratic governance attempts (Council of Europe 2000), or the deliberation of culture as a human right (UNESCO 2007), to mention just a few of the 'social turn' aspirations in normative documents.

Organised as a state property with international scope, the national enclosure of the past has thus been progressively stripped from social meanings and cultural content into a micropolitical and economic niche to generate national identity and revenues through its connection to tourism and other supporting sectors, compromising its public character and potential.

### **Heritage commons: The research field today**

As we are examining in this volume, commons theory and practice have been emerging globally as a hybrid academic discipline but also as a sensitive process of managing resources collectively and on the ground (Dardot & Laval 2019); Goods and processes used and produced in the commons realm are governed in democratic ways by the managing communities, making them accessible on regulated terms.

Nevertheless, heritage as a commons appears infrequently in the bibliography and remains largely unrelated to the critique of the dominant model described above. Sometimes, heritage commons are encountered in descriptive arguments, inspired by the 'common heritage of mankind' narrative and in relevant shallow interpretations of the term; the most prominent of them derives from UNESCO 1972 Convention and the World Heritage List holding assets of 'Outstanding Universal Value', asserting the vague 'common ownership' for heritage as discussed above (Zhang 2012; Council of the European Union 2014).

On a similar note and extending somehow the width of the economic horizon of heritage management, relevant scholarship focuses on the economic reading of the resources, attempting to discern the affordances of cultural capital as a Common Pool Resource and fend off potential ‘tragedies’. In these studies, there are a number of attempts to: incorporate cultural assets as input in other systems (Briassoulis 2002), frame, measure and commodify non-use values or capture non-market preference (Serageldin 2000; Throsby 2016) and based on that treat heritage services and cultural expression as ‘flow’, protecting them from depreciation and overconsumption in a quasi-sustainable horizon (Bertacchini et al 2012: 244; Gonzalez 2014).

However, in the last decade, parallel to the cultural commons broad and inclusive narratives examined in the Introduction of the volume, there has been a number of theoretical attempts, based on but also lagging behind well-established commons theories from economic, social or political perspectives (e.g. Ostrom 1990; Harvey 2012; Hardt & Negri 2009; Dardot & Laval 2019). The enquiries focus on management patterns, institutions, design principles but also social dilemmas in their governance (Gould 2014; Benesch et al 2015; Bertacchini 2015; Uzer 2015; Hammami 2015; Baillie 2015). In this spectrum, even though some studies engage in the exploration of specific cases, discussing applied heritage management aspects in detail (processes of inclusion, production and governance, see for example contributions in Gould & Pyburn 2017), they regularly fail to address ontological enquiries related to the resources, critically explore their (ethnographic) context in its historicity and/or consider the future of the heritage commons arrangements, giving rise to a number of queries: Can we actually consider the heritage commons potential in the contemporary (public) management settings? And what would it mean for heritage and the communities involved? How is it different from the ‘sustainable heritage management’ models and aspirations currently trending in the bibliography? But for a limited amount of scholarship (Gould 2014), lack of holistic arguments keeps the field relatively untapped, offering sparse and narrow narratives on specific case-studies (for example, Menatti 2017; Gonzalez 2014), limiting horizons to the deliberation of heritage services (Kolembas & Billas 2019: 104). Although a reality for other public resources, commons as an organisational principle for heritage has not been explored systematically and largely remain unrelated to the current problematic management of cultural heritage.

### The case of Greece

Greece has been at the forefront of ‘cultural property’ concept development, focusing on the nationalisation of cultural heritage along with other open-access resources (e.g. mines, forestries) by the nascent nation-state, pioneering what later became a mainstream activity for antiquities’ source-countries (Lekakis 2012; Carman 2018: 167).

In Greece, attempts to prevent the haemorrhage of antiquities abroad date to even before the emergence of the nation-state, preparing the ground for the establishment of the Archaeological Service in 1834, one of the oldest public services in the country. In the first Archaeological Law, antiquities were declared as “national property” (ἐθνικόν κτήμα) (A. 61) (Petraikos 1987: 55–56). However, this was a nominal regulation due to the widespread looting and the traditional ownership practices that encouraged the illegal trade of antiquities for many decades before the establishment of the modern state. Sixty-five years later, the new law “On Antiquities” (Law 2646/1899) smoothed out any chances of co-ownership left behind (A.1) and prescribed heavy penalties for looters (A.15) (Lekakis 2016). Following closely, by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> c. most European countries had acquired a legal framework for heritage as ‘state property’, including Spain (1860), Italy (1872), Hungary (1881), Egypt (1881) and the United Kingdom (1882).

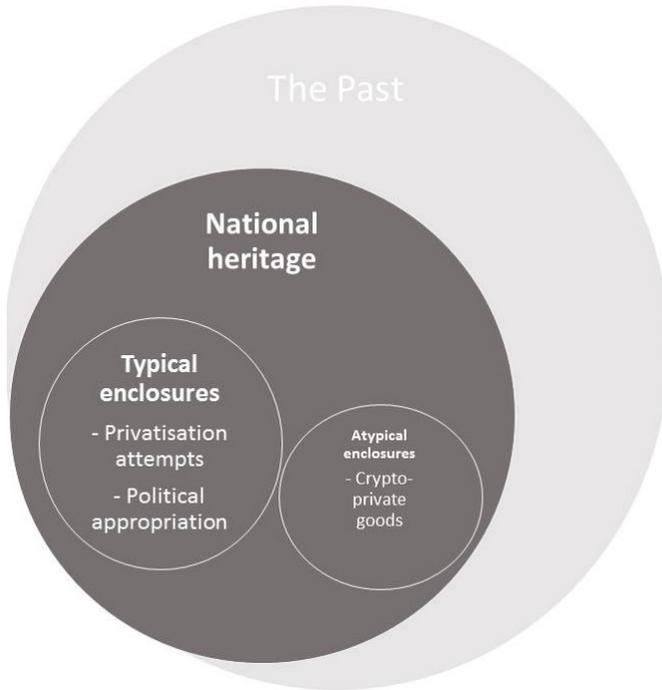
In Greece, the tradition of heritage as public property (*domaine publique*) owned by the state, was reiterated in the following Archaeological Law (Law 5351/1932) that established antiquities as inalienable goods, in the realm of *res sanctae*, exempting them from trade or transactions, for the benefit of the public (Voudouri 2003). State ownership and its obligation to preserve heritage for the public benefit (i.e. over private ownership, A.17:1) was reinstated in the Constitution of Greece (Hellenic Parliament 2008, A.24), introducing also the right of the people to preserve cultural goods and enjoy the right of cultural freedom (A.5:1, A.16:1) (Pantos 2001: 265). Finally, in the most recent Archaeological Law 3028/2002, the ‘public’ features as the final the recipient of heritage protection and enhancement, both important public goods that should be “incorporated in contemporary social life” (A. 3:1.6).

### Enclosures within the enclosure

These early developments and later appraisals had set a solid framework for public heritage management in Greece, nurturing however further enclosures within the national one.

#### *The tourism industry in Greece*

Following the heritage as an ‘output’ pattern for the tourist industry described above, the Greek National Tourism Organization was established in 1929 to promote cultural heritage and littoral summer destinations as a homogenized touristic product (Tziouvas 2011). This was shaped accordingly and included various stereotypes, such as traditional and monumental architecture, ancient art, the natural environment, but also the ‘naïve and benign inhabitants of the islands’, formulating an aesthetically inviting cultural identity for Greece, ready



**Figure 1:** A political economy of the past: New enclosures within the national appropriation of the past, also known as: Cultural Heritage.

to be experienced through the lenses of neo-classicism and philhellenism by subjects imbued in European modernity (Lekakis 2013b). This touristic product became the basis of a mass tourism pattern that, while lacking a cohesive promotion strategy, still operates today. However, apart from inviting the consumption of this truncated view of the Greek identity, this schema created a space that allowed locals to “rapproach” cultural heritage (Lekakis 2013b). Thus locals, organising an idiosyncratic enclosure within the national one, have been operating as cultural mediators, promoting expected and easy to digest heritage elements and services with high-exchange value, such as souvenir shops, rooms-to-let and restaurants. Heritage in the form of ‘cultural property’ is further appropriated, this time at a local level, to satisfy the omnipresent national narrative but also fulfil the neoliberal aspiration of short-term profit-making from it.

### *Crisis narratives & new enclosures: Typical and Atypical*

In the last decade, however, this homogeneous tourist product and its appropriation was somehow lost in the crisis narratives that dominated media reports about the European South and specifically Greece with the potential economic default and debt restructuring (Tziovas 2017). This context paved the way for urgent austerity measures including repeated cutbacks in wages, the abrogation

of numerous social rights (especially related to labour), an effective disregard for political liberties and systematic privatizations. All of these were considered cataclysmic changes that would have been unthinkable without the rhetoric and biopolitics of terror deployed in an undeclared state of exception and led to new enclosures of social and cultural goods (De Angelis 2017: 155–8).

The cultural heritage management field in Greece was accordingly affected, since further cuts were introduced in terms of budget and staff, while fast track processes for large developmental projects were introduced to reduce the costs and delays incurred by archaeological works (L.4072/2012; L.4146/2013). The private sector, in the form of large philanthropic foundations, rose to dominate heritage preservation and the new cultural production (Plantzos 2018). Critique soared: the receding state proved unable to adapt to the patron/facilitator patterns of management policy (Craik 2007), while chronic, palpable pathologies in Greek cultural management (low state budget on culture, problematic prioritisation of spending, lack of infrastructure and tools, understaffing, clientelism) were further aggravated (Kouki & Liakos 2015). The ‘state deficit model’ steadily became a commonplace argument in academic narratives, while ‘self-explanatory’ flexible models emerged as one of the dominant modalities in the relevant bibliography, focusing on profit generation, entrepreneurship and cross-sectoral competitiveness; currently, proposals float between the synchronisation of public and private sectors, synergies and the preparation of the ground for investment on culture and heritage (Gazi 2017; Antoniadou et al 2018; Čopić & Srakar 2012). In the same frame, relevant (empty of meaning) terminology like ‘cultural capital mobilization’, ‘rebranding’, ‘returns on investment’, ‘sustainable management for heritage’, was put forward and currently plagues narratives in cultural/heritage management in Greece (Lekakis & Dragouni forthcoming; Lekakis 2016; Hadjimichael 2014).

### Typical enclosures

This climate provided fertile ground for narrow and mainly shallow economic interpretations of cultural heritage, in various attempts to promote ‘heritage-led development’ in cultural management. Sometimes promoted as a disclosure/liberation from the state’s grip, the case studies that follow are just a small number that surfaced in the years of economic recession, suggesting new enclosures inside the national one and the dismemberment of cultural heritage to fit an unhinged neoliberal logic for public resources management.

#### *Privatisation attempts*

In the majority of the case studies, antiquities are presented as an obstruction to development, a factor that will result in the loss of invested money for the sake of a ‘few old stones’ and the state archaeologists’ inflexible *modi operandi*. At the time of writing (July 2019), this is still the case with Elliniko airport,

the disused Athens airport, where Lamda Development, backed by Chinese and Gulf funds claimed the tender – part of a post-bailout agreement between Greece and its lenders – and plans to turn the area into a complex of luxury residences, hotels, a yachting marina and casino at the expense of listed (moveable and immovable) heritage. The heritage preservation claims of archaeologists and activists are considered the final barrier to the alleged \$8.97 billion investment that will transform the ‘derelict’ area and ‘provide numerous work-places’ (The hellinikon project 2017). The same mishmash of arguments have been repeated verbatim in the case of Agrotera Artemis temple, an important landmark of classical Athens, claimed for a hotel development project (<https://www.artemisagrotera.org/?history=1>). In cases such as these, heritage assigned for preservation, is to be delimited within the framework of a glass-box for touristic purposes, to provide space for the building activities, while the protesters should be silenced not to scare away the investors.

In less publicised cases, cultural heritage is aggressively undermined, as in the case of Cavo Sidero in Crete and the proposals for the development of a golf course (Bellos 2019) or the earlier case of Aiglitis Apollo temple on Anafi Island, where the development company started utilising their religious tourism facilities, without any permit from the Ministry of Culture (Kazalotti 2009). Less known is the case of many historic and/or listed buildings in Athens that have been demolished or left to decay, due to lack of resources or aggressive urban investment strategies (Smith 2017) (Figure 2).

Cases of direct privatisation of heritage are infrequent; an example is the attempt (allegedly due to an administrative error) to include a number of monuments and listed buildings on the list of the Hellenic Corporation of Assets and Participations S.A., alongside the other properties to be expropriated again according to the country’s international bail-out obligations and the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy (GTP editing team 2019).

Crisis’ heritage enclosures also include accessibility limitations, in favour of more profitable activities by private firms, as in the Platos’ Academy & Philopappou Hill cases discussed in this volume or in the case of Apollo Zoster temple, where the real estate company managing the promontory, encompassing the adjacent beach and hotels, limits the accessibility to their customers, sometimes charging potential visitors to access the ruins (Figure 3). Relevant to the latter, i.e. from a ‘heritage services’ enclosure viewpoint, is the case of Messini archaeological site, where a project of archaeological tourism was organised (but not utilised) in collaboration with a nearby resort, inviting visitors to participate, as part of their all-inclusive cultural experience (Myrilla 2014).

Finally, a frequent scenario of enclosure relates directly to the operative management framework of cultural heritage, for the benefit of a private entity. Thus, in a well-known case in 2013, the excavator of the Nemea archaeological site, in light of the lack of staff and the potential closure of the visitor facilities, proposed a new scheme for the archaeological site and the museum:



**Figure 2:** Ktima Drakopoulou. Drakopoulou estate contains a complex of buildings from the 19<sup>th</sup> c. bequeathed to the Greek Red Cross in 1977. Delisted in 2003 and partially demolished in 2009, buildings and green space are now in grave danger of complete destruction to make space for new development (Source: author, 2020).



**Figure 3:** Observing Apollo Zoster's temple outside the fence (Source: author, 2019).

following an international call, a private firm would rent out the site and adjacent facilities, a model that held the potential to be adopted by many small and overlooked archaeological sites in Greece (Pournara 2013). Elements of this operative framework hijacking can be observed in the touristic study by Ralph Applebaum and Associates for the cultural resources in Athens and Attica (Bellos 2012). Indeed, it has even been suggested that this concept is already up and running, fully-fledged, in the form of the Legal Entity of Public Law scheme, under which a number of museums in Greece currently operate (Krimnioti 2019). A different branch of the same scenario, reflects resources mobilisation for the protection and promotion of ancient sites, including excavation and extensive restoration projects, such as those envisaged by the association ‘Diazoma’, who in recent years have been promoting various agendas for the management of culture in Greece, and going as far as to suggest that state heritage management is “post-ottoman” in terms of agility, bureaucracy and effectiveness (Pantazopoulos 2019).<sup>5</sup>

### *Political appropriation*

On another note, one can frequently observe the appropriation of heritage in favour of political parties and politicians’ agendas in the frame of the state management or at the borders of it, mainly using the imagery and connotations of classical antiquities. Following the decline of the foundational stories of Europe and the rise of the far-right throughout the continent (Bloemen & de Groot 2019), the most prominent manifestation of this phenomenon is the symbolic adaptation of classical antiquities by far-right political elements in Greece; a typical process observed historically in totalitarian states that call upon ancient heritage to promote an exclusionary sense of belonging and persecution of the *other*, paradigmatic in Nazi Germany but also during the military junta in Greece (1967–1974) (Chapoutot 2012; Kokkinidou & Nikolaidou 2004). In contemporary Greece, such scenarios still exist, constructing racist and sexist narratives in favour of an imagined, pure, national, mostly white, able-bodied, male agent; more often than not, narratives like these formulate biopolitical discourses against the other, as immigrants, refugees or the LGBTQI+ community (Plantzos 2012).

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<sup>5</sup> It is interesting to observe that ‘Diazoma’ also complements every post on social media with the hashtag *culture, common good* (#πολιτισμός #κοινό\_αγαθό). This is influenced from the ‘heritage of the mankind’ arguments discussed above, however it can also be considered as a feat of ‘commons washing’, a neoliberal attempt to hijack commons’ semantics and retract value for private benefit.

### Atypical enclosures

Apart from the typical enclosures, i.e. attempts to enclose part of the resources, the relevant services or the operative framework by undermining the public management body in charge, in favour of a private agent, other types of enclosures can also be discerned. These are collectively examined here as ‘atypical’.

A large category of these can be considered the enclosures within the management body, producing idiosyncratic crypto-private goods. These relate to the pathogeny of state management practices and current framework, pinpointed in catchword rhetoric of leftist pedigree and bureaucratic ankylosis coupled with chronic reservation against any private contribution for heritage protection and management, even if they come from well-intended, non-governmental bodies (Lekakis 2016).

The 2012 conference of the professional association of archaeologists working in the Ministry of Culture affirmed that ‘monuments belong to all’ (Sylogos Ellinon Archaiologon 2002). However, in many cases priorities are set by monopoly interests of persons or groups. Thus, even though a detailed description of the structures and power struggles within the Greek Archaeological Service is yet to be composed, a number of templates producing crypto-private heritage resources are familiar to individuals either working or liaising with the Ministry of Culture services, relating to heritage resources, framework



**Figure 4:** Demonstrating outside the Acropolis of Athens (Source: author, 2008).

or knowledge. Excavators, for example, have unlimited *de facto* rights to the material sometimes even transferable to people of their liking, contrary to the current Law (Bournia et al. 2014). What is more, they commonly retain documentation paperwork at their houses, jeopardising its safety and limiting the study of the material or rejecting the contribution to the national or European data repositories, claiming them as (scientifically) unpublished. In addition to this, on the operative framework side, it is observed that short term hires – a process sometimes hijacked in favour of local politicians and other extra-institutional factors – regularly work on other projects or cover administrative and immediate needs of the Ministry's branches throughout Greece. The refusal to collaborate can lead to a compromise in the trust relationship between the precarious archaeologist and the state frame. Finally, various allegations have highlighted the need to liaise personally with people in vital positions that can promote or withhold cases that need approval at a local level (Tsaravopoulos & Fragkou 2013: 95).

### Re-reading heritage as commons in Greece

Although these case studies could be interpreted as markers of a current state of emergency for heritage, our discussion suggests that it could all be related to the framework organised by the modern state, enclosing the past and assembling a malleable product to exploit for micropolitics and profit. In view of the present challenges, the need for effective heritage protection and the defense of its public character, a question arises as to whether we can move the slider away from the privatisation spectrum towards the opposite end, i.e. democratic and socially relevant patterns for its viable governance as a commons.

As noted, the commons are goods and processes used and produced collectively, administered in egalitarian and participatory ways by the communities that manage them. Communities' involvement in the process of commons production and reproduction is 'commoning'. This is also a rule of thumb to discern whether the activity we are examining or designing is actually a commons; i.e. (i) if it involves tangible or intangible resources, public or common, (ii) if it is managed by one or more communities of 'commoners' and (iii) if it is protected by a framework or rules organised and actively defended by the commoners, in the participatory act of 'commoning'. This tripartite schema is regularly characterised as a 'commons-based governance' and/or a 'production system' that sustains itself, protects the resources at hand and empowers the communities involved in social, political and economic ways, caring at the same time for the common benefit (Dellenbaugh et al. 2015: 13). There are many different categories of commons, from natural Common Pool Resources, such as pastures and irrigation canals to digital goods, such as open-source software or common productive assets, such as co-operatives (Ostrom 1990: 30; Benkler & Nissenbaum 2006). Even though a complete taxonomy is difficult to sketch



**Figure 5:** Re-reading heritage as commons: Resources, Communities, Commoning.

out, as commons are dynamic and porous processes, they always involve shared resources which are managed, produced and distributed collectively – in common stewardship – in ways that contest both private and state property logic (Hardt & Negri 2012: 69–80).

Can heritage fit this schema? Can a conceptual and practical shift from a resource-based to a commons-based approach be supported? Following the intertwined social and economic discussion of heritage affordances in the private and public realm and our observations on the case of Greece, we will attempt to discuss whether heritage can be read and managed as a commons. Getting back to the core of the commons conceptualization (the resources, the communities that manage them and the regulatory framework for the management process), we can discern: (i) the tangible and intangible material (for example, a historic building, an archaeological site and the social/traditional knowledge/beliefs or local practices and visions surrounding them), (ii) the communities and their values (local and distant stakeholders surrounding the resources, the public in a plural and diverse form, e.g. archaeologists, administrative bodies, locals, tourists etc.) and (iii) commoning (namely, the present and aspired governance arrangements along with the products in the process, either in the form of (scientific) knowledge and information or as relevant tourism and education activities).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A prior version of this schema has been presented in Lekakis et al. 2018.

### *Resources*

Examining further this tripartite schema, it seems that cultural heritage resources, or better cultural heritage goods, should be examined in a broad sense, including tangible and intangible, moveable and immovable assets of cultural and social significance, varying from monumental antiquities and museum collections to modern and contemporary heritage and oral history. Produced by communities and re-interpreted in each historic moment on cultural grounds, cultural heritage goods bear a composite biography, being essentially alive and potentially relevant to different communities.

Nowadays the past is commonly materialised through its national appropriation, segmented in an abstract, unchanging, cartographic space to be meaningful in the national narrative and as private goods in the form of reified exchangeable objects or assets for tourism. However, heritage is not easily scalable. Cultural heritage is compiled collectively over the course of time and ionised according to the social, political and economic circumstances of the era. As in the discussion of the ‘archaeological site’, concepts are invented to circumscribe these cultural phenomena, leaving behind tangible and intangible fabric that hold significant and/or alternative meaning to the delimited area (Olwig 2015: 93). The synthesis of cultural heritage should be contextual and considered as a negotiation of historic identities, contemporary views and future visions in the present, overcoming the sterile economic approach. Preservation and research are resource-intensive activities, meaningful when utilizing heritage’s widespread ownership and public textures, bringing out the concrete possibility of collective enjoyment.

### *Communities*

As the ‘social turn’ narrative has attested, cultural heritage goods should also be considered as social goods, forged in the iterations between historical memory and its contemporary interpretation by various communities that participate in the process, investing values in a dominant or more marginal way. Thus heritage, apart from the fabric and the intangible characteristics – related but not always depending on it – includes particles of identity of a society in its historicity, and the vision for the future in the present. This is a deeply sociocultural process that is always conditional and “in the making” (Lekakis & Dragouni 2020), negotiating the affordances of cultural goods, depending on the needs, the challenges, the local, national and global conditions and the vision for the future. It is common knowledge that societies choose monuments to reflect themselves and co-create their significance in the present, in an unfolding relationship between the past, present and future.

In this context, heritage stakeholder communities should be acknowledged plurally, taking into account alternative values and significance ascribed or

brought out from heritage, in parallel with or against the national overarching agenda. This collective storehouse of cultural values (Carman 2005: 74) should be examined in context and at a local level contrary to the nebulous ‘humanity ownership’ argument, examined above.

Communities can be unbound geographically, as the new digital environment enables the participation of decentralized communities, already with critical contribution in the proliferation of digital commons (Benkler 2006: 2; Bollier 2008: 1–20, 117). Thus, contrary to the economistic approach that considers stakeholders as customers and tax-payers, the concept of participant communities needs to be re-assessed, in a more open, inclusive and political way, acknowledging the power imbalances and their relevant contribution in the formation of heritage. Also, contrary to the essentialist understanding of meanings ascribed, we need to listen tentatively and allow the re-enchantment of cultural heritage goods.

### *Commoning: Commons-based governance & production*

The socially mediated, collective and distributed activity for management and production is inherent in the commons and can be summarised as a verb; “to common” (Linebaugh 2008; Dardot & Laval 2019). Commoning is a central set of functions and the social network in which the resource is situated, but also a prevailing ethic among the participant communities, utilizing and providing normative valence to the resources while also allowing self-reflection and progressive maturity in the establishment of management mechanisms and institutions (Roe 2018: 409).

### **Governance: Institutions & frame**

Thus, governance implies new forms of social gatherings and networks that decide on the common resources in participatory and democratic ways, forging the sense of collective ownership (Gerber & Hess 2017: 725). Apart from these basic characteristics, implying co-operative, free associational networks and mutual decision-making processes, it is difficult to suggest a formalistic pattern for commons governance as it will be related to the relevant social and cultural context and should retain its versatility and adaptability, while protecting the resource, generating values and bringing people together (Bauwens & Niaros 2017). Ostrom suggested governance patterns following eight design principles (Ostrom 1990), however there is an imperative need to focus on a case by case basis, dealing with the resources and the communities in question, deliberating among others: access rights, extraction rights, management rights and exclusion rights (Hess & Ostrom 2003: 127).

There are no pre-modern utopias to go back to. However, we can learn from the past; studying the values emerging from the management of the CPR prior

to being purged by modern life and incorporating them into contemporary designs. Neighbouring commons fields can also provide interesting case studies and tools for examination. For example, over the last decade social movements for the cultural and natural resources in Greece have made their presence felt by implementing important projects; however, they have failed to consolidate this into wider networks of power circulation, let alone accumulate it into such a constituent power or commons-based production (Bekridaki & Broumas 2016: 232; Nikolopoulou 2019). These case studies suggest that examples of synergetic behaviour in heritage management do exist, however commons-based governance is a new and largely undefined field, based on 'proposals' (Tsaravopoulos & Frangou 2013; Gonzalez 2014) or participatory based approaches with references to the commons theory (L-D Lu 2007). Most of these, fall under the 'aspirational' bibliography of heritage management, without significant practice-based evidence. This is undeniably an area that heritage commons research should turn to.

### Production: knowledge & services

Hybrid systems of governance based on communal validation and negotiated coordination are focused on commons production, in the form of knowledge, information or service. In this locally based but globally oriented production process, use value is generated through the collaboration of people with access to the distributed capital and means of production (Bauwens et al. 2019). Economic efficiency, profit, and competitiveness are not cast away however they cease to be the guiding principles of the process. In this context of peer-production, the boundaries between producers and consumers become blurred, enabling the so-called "prosumers" or "producers" (Bruns 2008) hybrid model and other novel forms of social formulations. Relevant licences can protect the products in an emerging post-capitalist landscape focusing on commons accumulation in a co-op mentality, as documented in 'public licences': 'contributors can use, enterprises need to pay'.

Commenting on the products, social and scientific knowledge is one of the main spin-offs from the commons-based governance patterns for heritage, non-rival and sharable, that we can focus on as a straightforward way in the heritage commons scheme. Knowledge can be considered part of the resources, but also a result of commoning, a product of social interaction and production by the various communities mobilized around the cultural resources, providing new meanings in their biography, as described in the 'Resources' section of this chapter. Social knowledge produced can also feed back to the governance process and in a wider sense to the cultural context of the heritage commons, re-invigorating cultural commons that is essentially part of all commons. Scientific knowledge produced must be open and accessible to the communities related to the heritage commons. Digital ways of sharing came to

revolutionise knowledge commons and various possibilities can be discerned, ranging from digital repositories (Europeana) to open licences in Galleries, Libraries, Archives or Museums (Sanderhoff 2014). Finally, knowledge can be transliterated to information, the basis for heritage interpretation opening up to current and future participants, who are thus invited to co-create.

On the other hand, services' development requires more careful planning, again being informed by practices in relevant fields, away from capital-centric modalities (Gibson-Graham 2006). Community based museums or locally run touristic enterprises can be organised in the form of co-operatives that have been making their presence felt over the last decade in the European South. The Social Economy sector is currently a small niche, although it holds significant potential, comprising of co-operatives, associations, foundations, non-profit and voluntary organisations (Gibson-Graham et al 2016). What is more, Solidarity Economy initiatives have contributed to the alleviation of numerous issues instigated by the economy recess and the default of the welfare state in many European countries; among others these include work collectives (cafes, restaurants), social grocery stores, networks for distribution of goods without middlemen, social kitchens and movements for the collection and distribution of food, social clinics, pharmacies for the uninsured and time-sharing banks.<sup>7</sup> Heritage services organised in Social or Solidarity Economy patterns can be the main line of defence against the expansionist modality of cultural economics and co-optation attempts by market and state forces but also hold prefigurative potential to an alternative commons-based cultural economy (Lekakis & Dragouni forthcoming).

### Cultural heritage in the realm of the commons

In this chapter, we attempted to discuss and describe an alternative understanding of cultural heritage, as a commons, looking at problems in the crisis-laden Greek heritage context. Cultural heritage goods include material and immaterial resources but also the communities deciding on their significance and participating on their governance and production. The past can be considered as part of the things that were there before we came to life, as a 'passed down' common resource. However, it is materialised through its national appropriation – where the concept of heritage derives from – having only superficial relation to the surrounding communities. Focusing on social values is part of the contemporary heritage management agenda, however it is still a limited field of endeavour, rigged in favour of the managing authorities and the overarching economic appropriation of heritage. By focusing on the commons agenda, we attempt to hack the concept of heritage and regain accessibility to the past.

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<sup>7</sup> For Greece: <https://www.solidarity4all.gr/>. Last accessed 15.08.2019.

Commons-based heritage governance can provide a solid ground to perform our social endeavours in the field but also a socio-political horizon to move to.

In this frame, cultural heritage goods are to be protected but also considered in the making, reshaping organically through participation and praxis, providing the possibility to connect and self-reflect for the interested communities that derive and assign values to it. This is a vital function for the people participating in heritage governance, the heritage commoners. Heritage can be a hub of social activity, facilitating values and holding imaginary and symbolic meanings. Community-based rules can define patterns of production and reproduction of further cultural goods and services, without negating use values and profit, closing in with neighbour commons-based products. Even though there is still a long way to go, especially when designing and implementing the specific governance patterns and institutions, commons can be the basis for a new political economy for heritage, one that can be truly considered as a human right.

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