

Historical Archaeology

“Here be dragons”: Historical and contemporary archaeology and heritage in the Aegean Sea --Manuscript Draft--

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“Here be dragons”: Historical and contemporary archaeology and heritage in the Aegean Sea

In memoriam

Marion Woynar (1978-2021)

ABSTRACT

Post-medieval, modern and contemporary remains are ubiquitous, yet their study and curatorship are uncommon in the Aegean geographic context. In this article we discuss the materiality of these uncared-for ruins, drawing from rural and urban remains in the Aegean, contrasted with other littoral sites in the Mediterranean. We focus on their social and cultural impact, and their role in contemporary communities along with the state provisions organized to protect and manage them in Greece and Turkey. We propose a present and socially engaged archaeological praxis and emphasize the need for historical/contemporary archaeology to be more politically involved, raising awareness and broadening the representation of marginalized communities.

Keywords

Post-medieval heritage, Mediterranean, Greece, Turkey

Cartographers in the 15th century used to mark the edges of the known world with dragons and sea monsters to denote remote and dangerous seas in which perilous beasts dwelled. In most cases these "dragons" were a troubling reminder for explorers venturing in a progressively more trodden world full of potential. Comparing these latent beasts with historical and contemporary archaeology and the heritage that can be found on the edges of our researched and curated past might be a little blunt; however, it allows us to consider the vigor and potential of this post-

1
2 15th-century heritage category, which still upsets heritage experts and is only partially dealt
3 with in the Mediterranean context.

4 In this article we raise issues concerning the **materiality** of these post-medieval ruins
5 and the remains of the contemporary era, focusing on their social and cultural **impact**, and their
6 role in contemporary communities. We also examine the **disciplines** related to their study and
7 the **provisions** set in place to protect and **manage** them. We focus on rural and urban remains
8 in the Aegean, examining parallels on the opposing shores of Greece and Turkey, and contrast
9 them with littoral sites in the Mediterranean more broadly.

10 Post-medieval, modern and contemporary remains are ubiquitous, yet their study and
11 curatorship are uncommon, especially in the Aegean geographic context. They do not form an
12 established research field and many of the difficult issues surrounding them remain
13 unaddressed, falling between the cracks that differing social and political interests create. If we
14 wish to confront the dragons that lurk at the edges of the heritagized and managed past, we must
15 employ a more systematic archaeological praxis, one that engages with multiple stakeholders,
16 operating in and across communities. We need to employ an active stance that aims at protecting
17 and organizing the available cultural reserve today, but one that also allows future generations
18 to reflect on and handle it according to their needs and priorities.

42 43 **Managing Aegean Monuments**

44 The Aegean Sea, linking and at the same time separating the Greek mainland, the Western
45 shores of Turkey, Crete and Cyprus and the grouping of the Aegean islands,¹ has allowed a
46 mosaic of communities to flourish through the centuries. In this variable geographical and social
47 context that makes the Aegean Sea a “micrographic Mediterranean” (Svoronos 1992:34),
48 civilizations thrived, leaving behind a wealth of material remains. These were deposited on
49 complex palimpsests, commonly revealed in later times during field cultivation or other digging

61
62 ¹ Sporades complex at North West, Cyclades at the center and the Dodecanese at South East.

1 activities. These remnants of a not always well-defined past were imbued with exchange value,
2 magic energy, or merely practical potential as building blocks, and as such were used by the
3 local communities (Lekakis 2006; Hamilakis 2007). However, ancient material remains are also
4 historically known in the Aegean for their symbolic value and have been harnessed politically
5 to suggest palpable continuity from glorious ancestors, undisputed authority and conceded
6 precedence. Although ancient history and archaeological interpretation hold records of such
7 manifestations in the Aegean context,² this concept of re-using antiquities for political and
8 symbolic purposes was fully materialized during the 18th and 19th centuries, the period of
9 nation-state building in Europe (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1988; Anderson 1991). Thus, the
10 collective political subjects in our geographical context, that is the late Ottoman Empire, Greece
11 and Turkey, have built different historic narratives and heritage management agendas revolving
12 around socially and culturally significant sites, buildings, landscapes, and figures. As has been
13 systematically documented (Skopetea 1980; Özdoğan 1998; Hamilakis 2007; Damaskos and
14 Plantzos 2008; Dikkaya 2017), disciplines including archaeology, folk studies, history, and
15 linguistics have been called upon to defend and document the glorious past in the present, in the
16 process establishing an inherited superiority against antagonists. Through this practice these
17 disciplines themselves came of age, focusing mainly on culture-historical approaches and linear
18 interpretations, shaping objectives, means, and meanings but also the contemporary
19 monumental landscape in the Aegean Sea (Kotsakis 1998:55).

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46 In Greece, a decision was made early concerning antiquities associated with ancient
47 Greek stardom and Pericles' Golden Age cult (Lowenthal 1988:733), an approach that had been
48 widely appreciated in Western Europe since the Renaissance. In the second half of the 19th
49 century, Byzantium was added as a middle point in a linear route from antiquity to the
50 contemporary, post-revolution era. Following the re-appreciation of the Middle Ages in Europe,
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60 ² See for example, the story of the bones of the mythical king of Athens Theseus exhumated in
61 the 5th century B.C. after an oracular command and transferred to Athens to assert superiority
62 over the other city-states (Plutarch, Theseus 36.2).
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Byzantium, the “Greek medieval period” was deployed to “debunk” the theory of Johann Fallmerayer (1830 onwards), which argued modern Greeks had no affiliation with the ancient Greeks and should be practically considered Slavic in origin (Lekakis 2018a:372). In Turkey, the selection of the ancestors was not as straightforward. In the middle of the 19th century, the Ottoman Empire, with the renowned “Tanzimat” (Reorganization) reforms (1839–1876), attempted to synchronize with Europe through political reform, secularization and renegotiation of property rights and trade agreements. The Sublime Porte aimed at taming the tides of emerging nationalistic movements such as the Greek one,³ promoting a collective Ottoman identity among the diverse ethnic communities that lived in its vast empire. In this process, a “customized classicism” was embraced centrally, relating to the Hellenistic remnants of Asia Minor and forging a versatile, quasi-national identity to echo the origins of Western civilization (Özdoğan 1998:113–115; Hodder 1998:124–126; Çelik 2016). However, the nationalistic movement of the Young Turks (1908) and the succeeding Turkish Republic (1923) pushed forward an ideological framework for the sovereign nation-state, closer to the European standards and based on an ethnohistorical theory connecting Sumerians and Hittites to modern Turks (Özdoğan 1998:116–117). In this counter-narrative to European historiography, the ethnic-cultural reference point of the newly born state was removed from Istanbul to Anatolia, focusing on Neolithic and Bronze Age civilizations and excavated remains, silencing Turkic nomadism and gradually de-emphasizing the intertwined Muslim and Ottoman past (Shaw 2004:132–136).⁴

Following these leads, on both sides of the Aegean, national legal frameworks were

³ Contemporary Greece was part of the Ottoman Empire up until 1830 and the London Protocol (2 February 1830), when acknowledged as an independent and sovereign national state.

⁴ A recent nationwide survey in Turkey (3,601 people) investigated the social awareness and understanding of archaeology and antiquity. The majority of respondents related archaeology to excavation and history and understood the excavated findings as belongings of the state. The “Hettites” were most commonly identified as one of the ancient civilizations in Turkey, followed by “Ottomans” (Sarat project 2018:7–9).

1 called upon to enclose and protect the relevant periods and corresponding remains of the past,
2 regulating their accessibility by local communities and foreign travelers. Even before Greece
3 and Turkey established nation-states, in 1825 and 1869 respectively, antiquities had become the
4 property of the state and their exportation was prohibited (Özdoğan 1998:115). In this way,
5 local views and unsanctioned uses of antiquities were marginalized and progressively branded
6 illegal (Bartu 2000). This aimed primarily at limiting the collecting fervor of Westerners, who,
7 imbued with colonial arrogance, considered locals primitive and unable to safeguard the artistic
8 achievements of their past (Esin 1993:185; Zoes 1996:151–159). However, these plans proved
9 difficult to implement, as antiquities were often used as a ready means to acquire capital to
10 support household incomes, nationalistic claims, or even to meet political demands.
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24 Archaeological investigation and management provisions were put in place for the
25 protection of the authentic material of the preferred past. Monumental architecture became
26 “useful ruins” that would complement the established national narrative, equating “monuments”
27 to “monumental” structures and producing a relevant national heritage. The safeguarding of
28 national capital was prioritized over the interests and interpretations of local communities and
29 progressively (from the 1930s onwards) promoted and advertised abroad to attract the upcoming
30 class of modern tourists, who roamed the Mediterranean in search of pristine and primitive
31 paradises (Lekakis 2020a).
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43 While this brief sketch allows us to understand the dynamics of archaeological research
44 and the heritage management context in the Aegean, it only hints at **the fate of the material**
45 falling outside the “national capital” category, such as **post-medieval and modern** remains,
46 and the role that archaeology as a **discipline** assumes towards them. To discuss this, it is now
47 useful to broaden our scope and examine two critical issues as they relate to post-medieval and
48 contemporary archaeology in the Aegean: the development of archaeology as discipline in
49 Europe; and the shaping of heritage and its management.
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Contemporary Archaeology and Heritage

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2 Processual archaeology developed in the 1960s and 1970s as part of the “New Archaeology”
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4 regime of theory and practice. Similar to other social sciences during the same period, it
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6 presented a positivistic version of archaeology, researching human behavior considered
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8 “predictable” as a series of interrelated social actions, adapting to the natural environment
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10 (Harding 2009). This science-based approach, closer to biological and social anthropology than
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12 the culture-historical origins of archaeology, cultivated a renewed interest in material remains.
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14 Ethnoarchaeology – studying the present to process data for analogies – became a favored
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16 methodology to tackle historical questions of material use, discard, recycle, and refuse
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18 (González-Ruibal 2014:1683)⁵ and it demonstrated the relevance and potential of
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20 archaeological methods to study contemporary societies, with renewed appreciation of the
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22 “static” but impactful objects of the recent past.⁶
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29 In the 1990s, **contemporary archaeology**, or archaeology of the contemporary past,⁷
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31 started to emerge and would deploy transdisciplinary perspectives and creative approaches to
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33 question the past, present and future roles of current material culture (Belford 2012;
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35 McAttackney and Penrose 2016:148). Considering materiality, contemporary archaeological
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37 practices distance themselves from the middle-range theory context and ethnoarchaeological
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39 analogies of processual archaeology, instead incorporating Marxist and feminist perspectives,
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41 and anthropological theory. Material culture is considered as an integral and entangled element
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43 of the world, not a mere passive product, carrying agency, conveying messages and representing
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51 ⁵ The work of Lewis Binford (1931-2011) on the Nunamiut people in Alaska is considered as
52 formative of the field (Binford 1978).

53 ⁶ The US-based Society of Historical Archaeology was established in 1967 along with the
54 homonymous academic journal.

55 ⁷ Published studies tends to acknowledge the emergence of contemporary archaeology in the
56 late 1990s, marking specifically the publication of Buchli and Lucas 2001, the establishment
57 of the CHAT conference series in 2003, the work of English heritage, the handbook of the
58 archaeology of the contemporary past (Harrison and Schofield 2010), several textbooks and
59 monographs (Graves-Brown et al. 2013; Harrison and Schofield 2010; Holtorf and Piccini
60 2009), as well as the *Journal of Contemporary Archaeology*, published by Equinox.
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itself, shaping and being shaped by human and more/other than human realities (Buchli and Lucas 2001; Pétursdóttir 2012).⁸

Most importantly, however, contemporary archaeology activities, a set of avant-garde practices against official, monopolistic, conservative archaeologies (Dezhamkhooy and Papoli Yazdi 2020), normally extend to socially and politically engaged discussions about everyday life (house excavations, homelessness), policy (de-industrialization, urban renewal, ruins), violence and conflict (World Wars, Cold War), social (in)justice, and critical heritages (future, Anthropocene) (Graves-Brown 2000; McAtackney and Penrose 2016). They support multiple narratives and readings of the past and give voice to alternative social groups and stakeholders (González-Ruibal et al. 2014:267; Lekakis 2019). In this way, contemporary archaeology also offers a platform to materialize the post-processual mantra of responsible, self-reflexive science; this is an opportunity to examine and critique the parent discipline itself.

Apart from theoretical problems relating to the timeframe of contemporaneity and the use of archaeology as a means to interpret the present, criticism has been levied at the disjunction between contemporary archaeology and the textures and properties of the heritage it produces. In fact, systematic conceptualization attempts concerning “contemporary heritage(s)” seem to be absent in the relevant published literature. This also reflects the lack of discussion on vital issues in heritage ontologies and management, such as dealing with palimpsests, historical layers on buildings and landscapes, authenticity and conservation/preservation options but also – and more holistically – the political economy of heritage, from production (how) to consumption (by whom). What is more, recent developments in heritage policy and practice are also neglected, such as the post-2000 broadening of “heritage” to include intangible heritage, landscapes, rural heritage, and cultural routes (Lekakis 2020a).

⁸ When discussing the emergence of the field, bibliography comments on the revival of *The archaeology of us* by Schiffer and Gould, published in 1981.

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Museums, on the other hand, seem to be at the forefront of dealing with and managing contemporary heritage, the discussion there being conducted in more specific terms: dealing with movable particles of an unorganized – and unauthorized – archive or collection in the confined environment of a pre-articulated space (Grindon and Flood 2014; Hicks and Mallet 2019; Hourmouziadi and Nikolopoulou 2019; ICOM COMCOL 2021).

A Critical Assessment within the Mediterranean Context

Mediterranean archaeologies lag behind the theoretical trends and management patterns introduced in Europe and North America, focusing instead on traditional agendas and methodologies (see also Palmer and Given this issue). This is probably one of the results of the omnipresent touristic agendas that have been guiding visitors in the Mediterranean region since at least the 1970s, promoting the singular model of sun, sand, and sea, occasionally augmented with some recognizable text-book ruins from the Greco-Roman era (Teutonico and Palumbo 2000).

This broad heritage and tourism model still stands in the geographical context we are examining, organizing around it all the available players, from the official heritage management authorities promoting their national past/touristic product, the tourist operators balancing demand and supply, and the heritage experts to the local communities responding to the patterns. This schema might be one of the main reasons for the lack of proliferation of historic and modern archaeology research and heritage management in the Mediterranean context, even though it has been developing in the last two decades in Central and Northern Europe.

Thus, although post-15th century material remains are documented and researched by other disciplines, mainly from historic, archival, architectural, and urban development viewpoints, historical archaeology is still in an early stage; a reality reinforced by the very limited relevant university courses in South-Eastern Europe (Mehler 2020:780, 784–5). Yet, multiple case studies have sprung up over the last decade, informed by work in the Anglophone

1 world (for example in Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Malta, and Morocco, as demonstrated by the
2 articles in this special issue) and are regularly presented in specialized historical archaeology
3 sessions held in the annual meetings of the European Association of Archaeologists (EAA), or
4 the Post-Medieval Archaeology Congress, held annually by the British Society of Post-
5 Medieval Archaeology (Orser et al 2020:2–3). Landscape archaeology projects, which are
6 numerous in the Mediterranean (see Given, this issue; Saidel, this issue), also offer interesting
7 insights into the post-1500 past. However, these studies do not form a cohesive subdiscipline,
8 as, for example, in North America or the United Kingdom.

19 Modern (architectural) heritage became visible and part of the discussion in the 1950s,
20 with voices raising concerns about the detrimental effects of development to the historic
21 landscape, the traditional face of settlements and the rural countryside. Various international
22 normative documents have been compiled to provide a framework for protection and
23 management, such as the Granada Convention for the protection of architectural heritage
24 (Council of Europe 1985) or the more recent European Landscape Convention (2000),
25 following up from standard European directives (ICOMOS 1964, UNESCO 1972) and the
26 increased inscription of Mediterranean sites in the UNESCO World Heritage List during the
27 1980s and 1990s. This has developed a legible – although incomplete, selective and
28 systematically biased – safety net for modern heritage, which comes as a stark contrast to the
29 rather hesitant evolution of historical archaeology as an academic subject and the general lack
30 of consciousness for the protection of this diverse yet largely unsettled – in terms of
31 management – cultural resource. A number of programs focusing on the management trends of
32 the cultural wealth of the Mediterranean in the 1990s and 2000s (Euromed Heritage in 1998–
33 2004, 2002–2007, 2004–2008, 2008–2012), resulting in a plethora of conferences (the P.I.S.A.
34 project, the DELTA project, the TEMPER Project, De la Torre 1997), have not catered for this
35 need. Their main focus has remained the ancient heritage and the (detrimental) interaction of
36 tourism to the preservation of the material remains and the livelihoods of the local communities.

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Historic and contemporary heritage remains plentiful but still marginal in Mediterranean heritage discourse. A systematic change of stance is needed, one based on the paradigm of historical and contemporary archaeology blossoming in other parts of Europe; but there is also the need for customized heritage management catering for the plural public and allowing space for community-led solutions.

Aegean Archaeologies and Heritages: Aspects of the Contemporary Context

The Context: Antiquity and Tourism

Traditional archaeological approaches are still prevalent in the Aegean context, organizing research patterns and determining the heritage products offered to the public and the touristic industry.

Aegean archaeologies – that is archaeological research in the context we are discussing sanctioned and monitored by the official authorities – often trail behind theoretical developments such as the culture-historical paradigm that can be considered dominant and operative, emphasizing materialities from the authorized past, i.e. the ancient and Byzantine periods in Greece and prehistoric or photogenic classical sites in Turkey. Official and typical research agendas do not regularly extend beyond these pasts, also marking a methodological deficit in ways of tackling modern and contemporary material, leaving post-15th-century remnants for folk studies or urban development for restoration, re-use or demolition. Late Byzantine and “modern” phases have been knowingly sacrificed in excavations of non-monumental remains with archaeologists eager to reach more “historical” layers. A striking and early example is the church of Agios Dimitrios Katiforis in the center of Athens, which was dismantled to retrieve architectural members, inscriptions, late Hellenistic and Roman sculptures, and part of the late Roman wall of Athens (Malouchou 2021; see also Vroom 2013 for the case of the Athenian Agora).

Historical and contemporary archaeology features sporadically in the Aegean context

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2 and can be safely considered not yet embedded in standard archaeological practice. However,
3 stand-alone projects do exist, as we will examine in the following case studies.

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5 In terms of heritage, national authorities are reluctant to add new paradigms in the
6 national monumental agenda. Modern heritage remains unsettled in terms of protection and
7 promotion, an awkward addendum to the monumental saga of the national heritage reserve
8 accompanied with problematic management decisions and public reception. In general, heritage
9 values seem to diminish as we move further from the officially organized monumental canon,
10 to extinction when approaching contemporary times: A paradigm that can be easily explored
11 through multiple examples, such as the standing Ottoman architectural heritage in Greece
12 demolished or used for quotidian purposes (Brouskari 2008), or relevant monuments in Turkey,
13 such as the Genoese architectural heritage in Istanbul (Sağlam 2019). The Venetian
14 fortifications of Heraklion in Crete (15th century) form an interesting parallel: even though the
15 plans for demolition were averted in the 1960s, the walls were semi-abandoned until recently
16 or hosted various incompatible uses, such as a football pitch.
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34 New heritage produced in the Aegean reshuffles the official heritage reserve, enriching
35 the established categories to explain and confirm the national project, in a monumental and
36 tourist-friendly form (Orbaşlı 2013). This is well observed on the eastern coast of the Aegean,
37 where policies for development and promotion in Turkish cultural heritage are largely tourist
38 oriented. As discussed elsewhere (Lekakis 2005), restoration projects in Turkey feature stylistic
39 reconstructions and extensive use of new material – sometimes in creative, not scientifically
40 accurate, ways – in order to replace available architectural members in their “initial” place,
41 covering unwanted historical periods, and enhancing its readability and presentability, towards
42 its “original” form (Figure 1) (Akurgal 2001:126; Orbaşlı 2002:9; Orbaşlı 2013:243). Apart
43 from the impact on the material and form of the monuments “restored,” this practice attracts
44 more state funds and materializes “touristic destinations,” creating a vicious funding circle that
45 further marginalizes peripheral (historic and contemporary) heritage, and non-mainstream
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1 narratives (Lekakis 2005). In Ephesus, for example, specific monuments such as the Library of
2 Celsus or the Ephesus Great Theater have been strategically invested in to receive the majority
3 of tourists who visit the ancient city. On the other hand, Ágios Ioánnis' basilica, the İsa Bey
4 Mosque and other monuments in and around the modern city of Selçuk stand ignored (Orbaşlı
5 2002:7; Demas 1997:144; Scherrer 2000). Extensive restorations may not be a standard practice
6 in Greece in the same terms, but the touristic appropriation of ancient sites is a common
7 denominator in the western side of the Aegean, pushing monuments dating to later times out of
8 the heritage management margins.

19 Archaeology is a gated discipline in the Aegean and most of the Mediterranean, limiting
20 the availability of interactions with other stakeholders, including public involvement, during
21 and after the completion of the archaeological projects (for a rare exception, see Gambin and
22 Kassulke this issue). Communities commonly remain estranged behind heavy fences due to
23 strict legislation and specialist jargon (De la Torre 1997; Avrami et al. 2000). This pattern,
24 promoted nationally to protect the public good, is reflected in the attitudes and choices of the
25 local communities: it seems that tourism is the main way to approach heritage (Lekakis 2013)
26 and communities surrounding heritage resources have been known to invest in this potential.
27 The Sarat Project confirms the schema for Turkey, where 76% of a surveyed sample holds that
28 “archaeology should serve tourism” (Sarat Project 2018:14), arguably “the most immediately
29 evident demonstration of our concern for the past” (Turner and Ash 1975:133). This
30 understanding fuels unsustainable practices in unprotected heritage and the landscape:
31 monothematic interest in heritage, apathy for other cultural resources, and bottom-up pressure
32 for summer tourism infrastructure development are nowadays common practices in the
33 Mediterranean. Based on market rules, they are expanding towards tourism peripheries and are
34 nearly impossible to pause by design (Grima 2020:100; Herzfeld 2001). The results are
35 devastating for post-15th-century remains in rural and urban touristic contexts, shaping the
36 contemporary façade of Mediterranean destinations (Lekakis and Chatzikonstantinou 2020).

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2 In this state-directed heritage-for-tourism strategy and relevant local response,
3 meaningful interactions with heritage resources are condensed in “reactance” practices (Lekakis
4 and Dragouni 2020a:84), as in the demonstrations against public works putting heritage
5 resources at risk; the Europa Nostra 7 most endangered heritage sites in Europe list⁹ is a telling
6 example, featuring various case studies from the Mediterranean and the Aegean. These protests
7 for culture/heritage can be better categorized among other latent processes and mnemeiotic
8 gestures, wherein communities develop their own codes and practices for dealing with socially
9 and culturally significant cultural resources, forming in this way new types of “critical” and
10 “future” or “in the making heritage,” not-yet-part of the official heritage bundle of sites and
11 monuments (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020a). However, these conceptual frameworks and
12 relevant actions fly well under the radar of official cultural policy and public management,
13 remaining mere research thematic for cultural historians and heritage experts.
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29 In the next two subsections we attempt to further explore these observations through
30 case studies from rural and urban contexts in Greece and Turkey.
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36 *Rural Heritage: Ubiquitous and Tourism-Oriented*

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38 Rural heritage falls into the array of modern heritages still not systematically cared for by
39 official heritage authorities in the Aegean. Rural heritage can be understood as a network of
40 edifices, natural resources and socio-economic activities that co-created the broader natural,
41 social and cultural landscape, leaving behind material and intangible remains. We usually
42 acknowledge rural heritage through the edifices left behind by the relevant economies, mainly
43 land cultivation and animal husbandry; these include terraces, trails and passages, threshing
44 floors, windmills, watermills, wells, fountains and cisterns, and agricultural structures for
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57 ⁹ <https://www.europanostra.org/our-work/campaigns/7-most-endangered/>. Accessed 21

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1 temporary accommodation and/or storage that frame the rural space of the recent past in the
2 present. These edifices are highly variable, responsive to environmental conditions and
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4 landscape management strategies, and handed down over successive generations up until the
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6 1950s and 1960s, when electricity and mechanical means of production and transportation
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8 transformed rural space, rupturing local communities and pulling them into modernity (Lekakis
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10 and Dragouni 2020a:86).
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14 Having studied rural heritage edifices extensively at Naxos (Cyclades, Greece) and other
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16 Aegean islands and participated in a pilot study on the Urla-Çeşme peninsula (İzmir, Turkey)
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18 (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020a; Turner et al. 2021; Lekakis 2020b),¹⁰ we could make a number
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20 of observations. As rural heritage edifices follow the socio-economic realities of local
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22 populations, they are now mostly partially used or abandoned. Many are of ancient origins (see,
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24 for example, the Aegean terraces of later Medieval period, c. A.D. 1000–1600) and commonly
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26 products of palimpsestic investment on the landscape (Turner et al. 2021; Crow, Turner and
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28 Vionis 2011). However, their attributes and values are largely underexplored. In most cases they
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30 are interpreted through folk studies, which dealt with rural space – at least until the 1980s – as
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32 a continuum from antiquity, serving the national narrative by confirming the habitus of the
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34 nation to the geographical context of the state (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020a).
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41 Extending this approach to the heritage management field, rural heritage is, more often
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43 than not, aestheticized for (alternative) tourists wishing to dwell in the hinterland, considered
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45 somehow as a natural and picturesque setting for walkers, stripped from any social or political
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47 agency or simply neglected, as in the case of the inscription of Ayvalık Industrial Landscape in
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49 the UNESCO tentative World Heritage List.¹¹ Movable artifacts from rural heritage can be
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56 ¹⁰ On August 12th 2019, as part of the 2nd workshop of the project “Unlocking the Ionian
57 landscape: Historic landscapes at Urla-Çeşme Peninsula”, we organised a walking tour in the
58 area of Germiyan led by Prof. Elif Koparal and attended by the local trekking club: ‘Mimas
59 dagcilik ve doga sporlari kulûbû’ (Lekakis 2020b)
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61 ¹¹ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6243/>. Accessed 21 May 2021.
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1 exhibited in relevant folkloric museums, again disengaged from the historical and political
2 context, merely reiterating the historic narrative of continuity for touristic consumption (Figure
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7 Despite the dominant research and touristic treatment, rural heritage remains socially
8 and culturally significant in the local context, carrying important values for local and dispersed
9 communities through diverse narratives: either of a romantic character or of self-referencing
10 departure, recalling personal and family history/ies (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020a; Lekakis
11 2020b) (Figure 3). In either case, narratives converge on the significance of rural heritage and
12 highlight the need to preserve it for the sake of collective “memory” in a fast-paced world. This
13 comes as an interesting juxtaposition to the unsettled status of rural heritage in terms of
14 management, as not (yet) part of the official heritage bundle of sites and monuments and thus
15 not yet properly protected. This framework allows a relative freedom in the appreciation of the
16 plural values of this type of heritage and the involvement of numerous interested stakeholders,
17 along with the potential for developing new forms of community-based management. However,
18 resilient and appreciated as rural heritage might be, nowadays it is in danger due to various
19 pressures, such as urbanization, rural depopulation, mechanized rural economy, renewable
20 energy infrastructure, the touristic gaze, and the downgrading of the historic rural landscape
21 (Figure 4) (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020b).
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46 ***Urban Heritage: Identity Signifier and Enclosed***

47 A somehow analogous scenario can be traced in the urban context, related to the better defined
48 and invested in category of urban architectural heritage.¹² Considering Athens and İzmir this
49 time, both cities boast a rich modern history and a resulting multicultural architectural reserve.
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58 ¹² Our observations on İzmir stem from the above-mentioned project in Turkey, and in Athens
59 from our participation in the “Recording and documentation of the 19th and 20th century
60 buildings in Athens” developed by the civic, non-profit organization MONUMENTA, funded
61 by the Stavros Niarchos Foundation in two stages (2013–2020).
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1 Athens, the renowned classical city-state, became the capital of the newly born state in 1834, a
2 decision that led to the redevelopment of the urban plan in line with the cities of Western
3 Europe, in order to host the incoming population but also the national narrative cultivated by
4 the Greek intelligentsia. An adapted version of neoclassicism became the architectural grammar
5 for public and private buildings that organized the urban space, solidifying a direct link to the
6 famous ancestor and the intention to rise up to the expectations of Western Europe. İzmir on the
7 other hand, a city-palimpsest dating back to the 3rd century B.C., emerged as a significant
8 commercial hub from the 17th century and more rapidly in the 18th for the caravans coming
9 from Eastern Anatolia and merchant marine ships from the West. The city was transformed in
10 the 19th century, altering the “oriental townscape” with its tangled streets and introverted
11 neighborhoods, in pace with the Tanzimat reforms. The Ottoman revival urban model was
12 further enriched with new architectural layers developed to house the local elite but also
13 Westerners working for the numerous companies and consulates in the city (Özsoy 2009:231;
14 Amygdalou 2023). The two cities followed different developmental patterns; İzmir was largely
15 destroyed in 1922 during the Greco-Turkish War, while Athens expanded to host migrants after
16 the Lausanne Treaty that ended the War in 1923. In both cities, a modernization process in the
17 1930s added a new layer of architecture informed by the modern movement and other
18 developments in Europe (Art Deco, Beaux Arts), customized in the local conditions and cultural
19 contexts (Amygdalou 2014:38,150).

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46 However, from the 1950s onwards, this diverse modern architectural heritage was in
47 danger due to inadequate planning but mainly from the exclusion of modern heritage from the
48 national reserve. This is a reality that causes awkward cultural management and policy attempts
49 and relevant reactions by the public.

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56 In Greece, L.1469/1950 introduced the category of buildings and movable finds dated
57 after 1453 (the date of the loss of Constantinople to the Ottomans) that could be considered as
58 “works of art” or “of historic importance” (A.1, A.5). The law prevented any unmonitored
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1 intervention in their fabric and affected buildings, and treats them similarly to their ancient and
2 medieval equivalents in terms of protection and management processes. However, these
3 protective measures, introduced in haste and without consultation, added an awkward body of
4 heritage next to a highly symbolic cultural capital. This was not well received by Greek society,
5 longing for “modernization” – parallel to the capitalistic economies of the European nations –
6 underway in the urban and rural environment of Greece in the 1960s and 1970s, in the form of
7 private housing, the expanding urban infrastructure and the building activity to cater for the
8 mass touristic surge (Lekakis and Gratsia 2023). It is no wonder that in this period Athens lost
9 the majority of its architectural heritage in favor of the new apartment blocks that now
10 characterize its cityscape (Gratsia et al. 2020). In İzmir, on the other hand, quasi-modernization
11 planning was employed to amend the destruction of 1922 but also eradicate by design
12 uncomfortable traces of the occupied past (Amygdalou 2014; Morack 2021). Industry
13 accelerated after the 1950s, propelled by various laws enabling building (such as the
14 Condominium Ownership Act in 1965) and with that the rapid urbanization and the increase of
15 parcel-building along with peripheral shanties to shelter incoming internal population from the
16 East and South East. İzmir’s architectural heritage was partially protected since the late 1970s
17 – listed as an “Urban Archaeological Site” – but this had limited success as architectural heritage
18 continued to be consumed by touristic building, creative reconstructions of the historic
19 environment, and the enveloping legal context, such as the 2012 Urban Transformation Law
20 (Ballice et al. 2019) (Figure 5).

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48 In the last twenty years, the context of government debt crisis and the disintegration of
49 the welfare state intensified destructive practices for modern heritage in Greece, both top-down
50 and bottom up. Privatization calls, “fast track” investments, and solutions for immediate
51 economic benefits have been favored at the expense of natural and cultural resources (Lekakis
52 2020a). For example, citizens have been attempting to relieve their problematic economic
53 predicament by engaging in disastrous activities with the invocation of the “deemed unfit and
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to be demolished” law (Code of Basic Urban Planning Legislation 1999, A.421-5), applicable when a (historic) building loses its roof. The introduction of the annual Single Property Tax (ENFIA) forced a number of people to rethink their property assets and should be related to the increase of demolitions in the last decade, especially in Athens (Lekakis and Gratsia 2023).

On the other hand, in the rapidly growing metropolis of western Anatolia (population c. 4 million), the uncomfortable relationship with modern architectural heritage seems to have reached a critical stage. Being alien to the nationally sanctioned past, demolitions continue to serve immediate social and economic needs in the city, while planning does not seem to cover the problematic attachment of the citizenship to İzmir, focusing rather on commercial interests (Kutlu et al. 2016). Further to this problematic set of policies, the text backing the listing of İzmir in the tentative list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites is characteristic. In this narrative, İzmir is described as a “Historical Port City,” its universal significance based on multiculturalism and its “Levantine” character.¹³ Attempting to enlist the city on a preeminently western list, the heritage management authorities seem to resurrect and reappropriate orientalist views (see the connotations of the term “Levantine,” Mansen 2011) in order to deactivate national and cultural antagonisms (for example, Ottoman, Turkish, Greek, Italian, and other Western approaches) and the uncomfortable destruction of the city in 1922. In this way, İzmir’s “legendary cosmopolitan charm” (criterion ii), “unique civilisation” (criterion iii) and “place in human history” (criterion iv) seem to reiterate a western understanding of the historic role of the city, obfuscating significant periods, social strata, and uncomfortable pasts, along with its tangible and intangible remains (Ballice et al. 2019).

Modern Archaeologies and Heritages of the Present and Future

Reconsidering the above, what are we to make of the emergent modern past, present around us in the Aegean but still going largely unaccounted for in terms of research and management?

¹³ <https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/6471/>. Accessed 21 May 2021.

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As we have explored, research and heritage in the Aegean are organized according to the national predilections of the past, shaping relative cultural policy in pace with European agendas. Historical and modern archaeology remains in a secondary position, while the relevant heritage produced forms an awkward addendum to the national cultural reserve of the Aegean states, dealt with unsystematically, protected ad hoc, and in danger due to expanding urbanization, the (summer) tourism infrastructure and significant but marginalized appreciation by local communities. Local communities in the Aegean, on the other hand, are also catering for the touristic demand, promoting and delivering the nationally sanctioned remains, ancient and Byzantine in Greece, and prehistoric and classical in Turkey: the “useful past” as a touristic product. Caring for historic and contemporary heritage is impeding this process, by expanding the protection measures and shrinking the modernization of the urban and rural landscapes.

As we move towards an uncertain future, issues will continue to emerge, the archaeological paradigm will continue to diversify, informed by various strands, and the heritage reserve will swell, while modern monuments will eventually become old enough to be engulfed in the official bureaucratic processes and harmonize with the official heritage agenda. However, until we reach this equilibrium, can we currently identify any practices to amend the present condition and mindfully engage with the material remains of the historic and contemporary eras?

For Aegean archaeologists, modern and contemporary archaeology is largely a terra incognita. We reluctantly trudge ahead of our (ancient or medieval) era of interest and prefer to turn a blind eye upon “the dragons,” that is modern layers in our palimpsests, considering it folkloric or, worse, anecdotal information. In this context, it is easy to deduce that we are in need of a substantial and programmatic cultural policy to promote (archaeological) research on the material remains of the recent past and defend strategically the preservation and promotion of modern and contemporary heritage, outside the touristic agenda, and on a par with the ancient one.

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However, this generic call cannot be customized if not inside the national, regional, and local context we are examining. In the case of the Aegean, where counter arguments to the demolition of historic buildings and/or urban(like) development are considered flimsy and economically invalid, we need a systematic research and action agenda to consider the local narratives, reactance and re-appropriations of the past and promote engaged solutions. Co-creation in research and collaborative management in heritage have been tested in a preliminary way, and they prefigure a more sustainable and just future for all interested stakeholders (Lekakis and Dragouni 2020a). They also respond to the calls for present and socially engaged archaeology and the need for historical/contemporary archaeology to be more politically involved, broadening the representation of marginalized people (Leone 1995:251).

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However, as the distancing of the public in the Aegean context is embedded and well organized in archaeological and (national) heritage dialectics involving strong bureaucratic mechanisms and alienating value systems, it will take some time to overcome “seeking consent” activities toward active participation and eventual co-creation in the research and preservation of modern heritage. Decolonization agendas, nowadays on the rise in humanities, are more than useful in this process (Baird 2012; Ray 2019). However, we should be aware of self-indulgent arguments and dead-end practices that cause calls like this to stagnate in the long-term, especially when applied to contexts facing different challenges from former colonies.

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We thus need a more active stance that can enable bottom-up praxis in parallel to our top-down work and applying pressure on policy makers. Indeed, historical and modern archaeology and heritage in the Aegean carries a number of values and memories of personal and collective valor, and can be a fulcrum for systematic communal thinking, identity reformation, and motivation to work towards its management. Reconsidering archaeological and heritage orthodoxies, this process can have a much more palpable result on the remains but also on the general consideration of heritage at the local level, which is known to be a positive enabler for broader multi-vector challenges, such as social cohesion, conflict resolution, and

1 environmental sustainability. The ecosystems of collectives and NGOs can play a significant
2 role beside our activities, deconstructing predominant ideologies in the field and equalizing
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4 dialogue with the local communities (Leone 1995:253).
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7 Archaeology can legitimize but also be a subversive process in the monumental time of
8 the state (Herzfeld 1991). This means that collaborative production of knowledge and
9 systematic curation of tangible products can be a constant praxis request, not limited to obscure
10 titles (for example, the archaeology of the historic/modern/contemporary/decolonization eras)
11 but born, organized, curated and performed in the society and on the streets by the plural public
12 as a critical appraisal of our work and a social demand. And this might be a good marker to
13 identify whether our research agendas and fieldwork are socially up-to-date and relevant: to
14 consider whether they could be inscribed on a plaque or be part of a demonstration, beside other
15 social demands such as education, justice and democracy.
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The author declares that he has no conflict of interest.

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FIGURE CAPTIONS

FIGURE 1. The temple of Athena in Pergamon, 3rd century B.C. The addition of new material on top of the original is noticeable, to enhance the presentability of the monument (Photo by Lekakis, 2002).

FIGURE 2. Östem Zeytinyağı museum in Çeşme falls in the category of folk museums that present material remnants of the recent past in a generic and depoliticized way. Here an olive steam-press is exhibited, with no comments on its provenance: a Greek factory in İzmir in the late 19th century, according to its inscription (Photo by Lekakis, 2019).

FIGURE 3. A public, built well at Lákkoudo near Agiassós bay at Naxos Island. Ethnographic research revealed a number of oral histories relating to the well as a central point in the landscape until the 1970s, nowadays almost abandoned and covered by vegetation (Photo by Lekakis, 2019).

FIGURE 4. Tripodes windmill (listed monument in 2008) at Naxos Island and rented rooms under construction adjacent to it. The case was raised by local and taken to the Supreme court

by locals (Photo by Lekakis, 2016).

FIGURE 5. The city encroaching all around İzmir agora of the Hellenistic times on the northern slope of Pagos (Kadifekale) (Phot by Lekakis, 2018).











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