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Veysel Apaydin *Editor*

# Shared Knowledge, Shared Power Engaging Local and Indigenous Heritage

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Veysel Apaydin

Editor

# Shared Knowledge, Shared Power

Engaging Local and Indigenous Heritage



Springer

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# About the Editor

**Veysel Apaydin** completed his Ph.D. in cultural heritage at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. His doctoral thesis (2015) evaluated political use of the past, identity construction and the relationship between heritage, education and attitudes towards heritage, taking modern-day Turkey as its case study. He worked as an archaeologist and heritage consultant in the United Kingdom and Turkey and has taught social research methods, heritage and museum studies and public archaeology courses at the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. He is also currently editor of the heritage section of the journal *Open Archaeology*.

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# Chapter 1

## Introduction: Approaches to Heritage and Communities

Veysel Apaydin

The last several decades have witnessed a rapid increase in the field of cultural heritage studies worldwide. This increase in the number of studies and in interest by the public as well as academics has effected substantial change in the understanding of heritage and approaches to heritage studies. This substantial change has also impacted the perception of communities, how to approach to past materials and protect them and how to share the knowledge of heritage. It has brought the issue of who has knowledge and how the value of heritage can be shared more effectively with communities who then ascribe meaning and value to heritage materials.

In this time, scholars have widely discussed and produced theories and practical ways to deal with these issues from different perspectives: the importance of education and archaeology (Corbishley 2011; Henson 2004), the ethics of cultural heritage (Ireland and Schofield 2015; Smith 2010; Hammilakis 2007), the interlinks between heritage and tourism (Chhabra 2010); critiques of colonial archaeology (McGuire 2008), the political use of the past (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013a) and use of nationalist approaches to archaeology and heritage (Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Meskell 1998), rights to knowledge (Atalay 2012; Nicholas and Bannister 2004), cultural heritage and intellectual property rights (Meskell and Pells 2005; Carman 2005; Nicholas and Bannister 2004; Smith 2004; Smith, Chap. 2, in this volume), the politics of objects in the museums (MacDonald 1998, 2013) and engaging with local and indigenous communities (Jameson 1997; Schadla-Hall 1999); Merriman 2004; Okamura and Matsuda 2011; Silberman 2007; Moshenska and Dhanjal 2011; Nevell and Redhead 2015; Moshenska 2017).

These research programmes and publications (and many more besides them) have challenged the past and current pitfalls in the cultural heritage studies and acknowledge the potential. However, there are still many issues centring on how to

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approach heritage materials, how to share knowledge and power and engage communities who in fact are the main generators of heritage materials as we are in the age of Anthropocene in which human is shaping all dynamics of culture and nature. Therefore, with this volume, I aim to bring different approaches to heritage and communities from various part of the world to understand both the heritage and the necessity of sharing knowledge and power as well as engaging with communities. Below I outline briefly the concept of understanding of heritage and its use and meaning as well as the construction of communities and the interlink between heritage and communities and briefly describe the papers in this volume.

## Understanding of Heritage

In recent years, understanding of and approach to heritage and interpretation of heritage have been the subject considerably discussed. Academics, researchers and heritage practitioners in the field have interpreted heritage from their own perspective. Answers for the question of *what is heritage* or *what makes something heritage* have been widely addressed. In fact, these are difficult, problematic and complex questions as it is a very subjective in which every single individual, group and community could have interpreted heritage from a range of different perspectives. Although heritage is very difficult to define, being a very broad term that can contain anything valuable from people's past, heritage can be determined not simply as an artefact or site, but it as a process that uses objects and sites as vehicles for the transmission of ideas in order to satisfy various contemporary needs (Smith 2006). It is definitely a vehicle of communication, a means of transmission of ideas, values and knowledge that includes material, intangible and natural heritage. It is a product of the present yet drawing upon an assumed imaginary past and equally assumed imaginary future (Ashworth 2007: 2). Therefore, the definition and use of heritage change over a time (Ashworth et al. 2007). This is highly interlinked with the larger process by which societies and human nature which give meanings to things and change them over a time (Hall 1997: 61) are constructed, reconstructed, shaped and managed in the present as well as will be used as a resource in the future (Ashworth et al. 2007: 13).

Acting as a resource means heritage stores memories of people who ascribed values and meanings to it. In this respect, Harvey (2008: 21) argues that heritage may reflect both future and past as it contains memories that are represented by heritage. Therefore, it has a purpose that changes over time (Holtorf 2002: 28). The change is also not limited only with time period, but also this change varies from region to region and from communities to communities who ascribe different meanings and values to heritage and use it for diverse purposes. Every social group also perceives and evaluates past from a different perspective as they are culturally dissimilar (Murray 2004; Trigger 2006).

## Uses and Meaning of Heritage

Although it is very difficult to define heritage, as it is very subjective and varies accordingly with the needs of individuals and communities, one certainty is that heritage as a discourse has always been the product of people who have generated and constructed and reconstructed with the requirements of people (Harvey 2001: 320). It is a cultural social practice, which has discourses (Smith 2006) rather than 'historical narrative' (Harvey 2007: 21). Foucault (1991) describes discourses as structures of skills that comprise the formation of information. According to Foucault, anything that encompasses knowledge is related to power; therefore, one can assume that heritage could also be seen as powerful objects or powerful discourses that have developed over time, because the objects and materials of the heritage have ascribed knowledge and meaning.

Because heritage has knowledge and meaning, its value also changes for individuals and groups as well as different cultures and societies. However, most importantly this change is highly linked to interpretation and value of heritage which is often linked to political ideology (Smith 2006, 2010, 2012). The meaning of heritage is developed over a time but as a result of social actions (Smith 2006; Byrne 2008; Harrison et al. 2008) which is also dependent on human interaction with culture and nature, as the definition and uses of heritage have been changed over a time (Ashworth et al. 2007). One of the main reasons for this change is that tangible, intangible or natural heritage which are ascribed positive values (Harrison 2013a: 5) loses its importance; therefore, they are 'forgotten' (Harrison 2013b) or ascribed diverse values, as in any periods, priorities and interaction of people and communities with cultural and natural heritage change because of the social and political transformations.

## Construction of Communities

In addressing the understanding of heritage and its importance and use, I perhaps must also explore the related questions: *What is community? What is it made of? How are communities constructed?* These are perhaps some of the most difficult questions to answer in describing community. Anthropological studies give a broad definition as a group of people who share similar values and who are also protected by the same group of people in order to survive and continue their lives. These values also play an important role for their identity construction. These similar values indicate members of a group who share common aspects and distinguish them from others, as these values also construct 'boundaries' of one community to other as described by Cohen (1985). However, these boundaries, which are only related to values of a certain group of people, are not sufficient to describe every single aspect of a community, which may have considerable differentiations between their members. This brings the issue of variation in identity construction within communities, even in groups that broadly share the same values.

These variations could be based on ethnicity or socio-political structures or different social relationships with other members of the community such as kinship, etc. For instance, in the city of Kars in the east of Turkey, the local communities are formed of combinations of many different groups whose boundaries are shaped by ethnic and socio-political structures. These structures also determine their world-view and values (see Apaydin 2017). During the nation-building process, particularly in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, hegemonic powers aimed to cohere communities around ethnic values as proof of the supremacy of one nation and excluding 'the others' (see Kohl and Fawcett 1995). In many cases, for instance, all around Europe, many communities were constructed around the value of ethnicity as well as religion, and tangible, intangible and natural heritage, which were linked to certain ethnic and religious groups, were used for propagation of this idea. For instance, during the Yugoslavian war in 1999, the boundaries of the conflict were shaped between two groups who were ethnically and religiously distinct to each other, and during the war, for both sides, the main targets were monumental heritage of other groups (see Bevan 2006).

The construction of communities is not always built around the ethnic and political and cultural values but also values of life experiences. For instance, in the past, during hunting and gathering, people may have had shared values that were centralized around a small group of people finding food for their survival, and following the hunting and gathering periods, agriculture played a great role in forming communities. Another example would be that of farmers today, as they are one of the communities who have shared life experience values. Of course, I am not suggesting that all farmers in the world make one community; they also distinguish themselves with many other aspects of their identities such as geographical boundaries. While a group of farmer in Scotland shares common values, others in the United States may share very different values.

A further well-known example might be the mining community, whose life experiences are very closely linked to their economy, and therefore their lives are dependent on it. However, it cannot be argued that every miner values and gives meaning to things in an identical fashion. For instance, miners in Manchester and Wales in the United Kingdom have a dissimilar identity construction although they also have many aspects in common. These dissimilarities vary from ethnic structure to language, geographical and lifestyle. That being said, all communities are formed by certain values that are shared by their members, while at the same time, every community also contains variation within themselves, with even the meaning of community differing among members; members of any given community may distinguish themselves with values other than those of the majority of community.

The definition of community is a very complex subject. This is one of the reasons that every single community should be considered in terms of its own aspects, structures and values. However, I can clearly argue one certain and common thing for any community, that is, the place where people have social relationships, build experiences and learn about life; it is 'where one learns and continues to practice how to be social' (Cohen 1985:15). This relationship and practice within the com-

munity further develop common values, which build elements of cultural heritage such as monuments, objects, songs, folklore and landscape.

As I have outlined the concepts of community and heritage above, it is clear that both terms are difficult to define and very abstract because the definitions of heritage and community are highly diverse and vary accordingly with social, political, cultural and geographic structures. However, what is certain is that these two concepts provide support to one another. Communities need to develop tangible or intangible heritage or ascribe meanings and values to natural heritage, which will help them to come together and create a sense of belonging that will also provide a resource to survive in a complex world. Therefore, we can understand that heritage is formed, shaped or constructed by communities by their current requirements and that community groups are described by their heritage (Crooke 2007) as it represents the identity of communities. This point also brings necessity of engaging and sharing the knowledge and power with communities as heritage practitioners and archaeologists dig into material cultures which already belong to local and indigenous communities.

## Engaging and Sharing

As I have attempted to explain, the concepts of heritage and community are both directly linked to each other. However, heritage studies until a few decades ago exclusively studied the material culture of the past as part of an elite approach and completely neglected communities' rights to knowledge of their own heritage. Heritage practitioners and archaeologists neither shared this knowledge nor engaged with communities about their heritage. Communities were also mostly deprived from contributing to heritage and archaeological managements and studies. This kind of top-down approach was quite common in many parts of the world. However, the recent studies and research in the field have shown the importance of including the public in projects and that sharing the knowledge and power produced through heritage studies and archaeological works is quite significant for the protection and preservation of heritage materials; it has also finally been understood that excluding the public from heritage is unethical.

These are the main reasons that have encouraged me to publish another book in the field of cultural heritage and public engagement: to find answers for the questions of *how can heritage awareness be increased among the public? What are the best ways of sharing knowledge and power with communities?* And, finally, *how communities can be involved in heritage projects more effectively?* I aim to present a wide array of case studies from many parts of the world to answer these questions. This volume brings together the experiences and research of heritage practitioners, archaeologists and educators to explore new and unique approaches to heritage studies. In this volume, readers will find interesting and useful case studies applying many different approaches and methods in the field of heritage studies.

Smith et al. discuss cultural and intellectual property in relation to indigenous people in Australia and also point out the ethical importance of acknowledging indigenous people's contribution to heritage as well as heritage studies. Approaches to communities' engagement with heritage from a participatory or bottom-up perspective have become quite common and have successfully managed to include and engage local and indigenous communities with the heritage that they have contributed to developing. This important aspect of this field, sharing knowledge and power during the management of heritage sites, is presented by Apaydin, who brings three case studies and discusses the pitfalls and potentials of excluding and including communities around heritage sites in Turkey. Doyle focuses on the community engagement projects in Ireland and points out the interlinkage between communities and heritage and the importance of community interests through heritage services of Ireland. Likewise, Pastor brings out an excellent and an interesting case study from Roman Barcelona, Spain, by discussing the relationship between communities and place and its importance in communities' life as well as highlighting the differences between academics and communities in valuing heritage. Biggi et al. discuss the famous case study of Herculaneum from Italy, how sharing heritage sites can also contribute positively to communities' social and economic life through capacity-building projects, alongside how to increase heritage awareness among local communities.

Practice-based archaeological education at heritage sites has become one of the indispensable tools of research projects in any part of the world. This subdiscipline of heritage studies has rapidly increased in importance and became compulsory for archaeological projects and museums all over the world. In this volume, Jankovic and Michelis bring an interesting case study from a Neanderthal site project from Croatia, where not only archaeological education but also the importance of participatory heritage education programme by focusing on constructive learning in practice and its impact on local children is highlighted.

The rapid increase of use of technology has also impacted in the cultural heritage studies and public archaeology. Museum, archaeology and other heritage projects have begun to use technology to share knowledge of heritage with public. Using technology without doubt has also enabled heritage specialists to reach large numbers of people. Serlorenzi et al. examine one of the great digital heritage projects from Rome, Italy, by discussing the SITAR web platform project and its importance in sharing knowledge and giving opportunities to the public to access that knowledge. Likewise, the increase of using social media among the public has also encouraged heritage studies to use this platform more often and more effectively. In this volume, Hassett et al. bring probably the most interesting case study in the field of digital heritage engagement. They discuss the importance of the use of social media in engaging a wider public through the TrowelBlazers project, which has been developed with an online participatory approach in order to increase awareness and, critically, to emphasize the role of women in archaeology and to provide an impetus for a broader community participation with heritage. Finally, Moshenska reflects on issues and problems of community archaeology and heritage in theory and practice.



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