

Introduction to the Dossier “World Heritage and the Public”

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Guest editor

This dossier is one of the outcomes of the third and final workshop of the European JPI–JHEP Heritage Values Network (H@V) project (www.heritagevalues.net/), partly financed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness through an “I+D+i Orientada a los retos de la sociedad” project entitled “La Red de los Valores del Patrimonio” (Ref PCIN-2013-036). This workshop was held at the University of Barcelona from 19 to 21 February 2015. The three-day event, inaugurated by Joan Pluma, then the General Director of Archives, Libraries, Museums and Heritage of the Government of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya), included a combination of papers, round tables, activities, discussions and debates. The discussion topic was “Heritage Values and the Public” and it was attended by a multi-disciplinary group of more than fifty established professionals and student volunteers. From the five discussion lines during the workshop – Inclusivity; Participatory and Sustainable Heritage; Virtual Heritage, Heritage Values and the Public; Tourism; and World Heritage (WH) – this dossier is a compilation of a selection of the contributions to the last of these.

The first article deals with how public participation has been regulated in World Heritage. Authored by Díaz-Andreu, it opens with a review of the steps taken towards increasing the consideration of local communities in heritage management. These have included a series of commissions, WH Committee meetings and declarations. Special attention is paid to the changes made to the Operational Guidelines throughout the last two decades. These began in 1995, when the suggestion for local community participation in the nomination of WH properties was added. Another key change, encouraging the engagement of local communities in WH management, was made in 2008. An examination of how the recommendations given in the Operational Guidelines are implemented in practice is, however, not as satisfactory

as expected. The analysis of the three rock art properties in Spain – World Heritage properties 310, 874 and 866 – indicates that procedures are only now beginning to change and are still far from the spirit of the discussions that led to the modifications of the guidelines in the first place.

Ethnographic approaches are used by Qian Gao in the second article in the dossier to examine the impact of World Heritage designation on local communities, and how the views held by these local communities on a particular site are influenced by the way its tourism commercialisation has been planned. Using the Daming Palace in China as a case study, the fieldwork undertaken for this research included in-depth interviews, participant observation, and casual conversations, which allowed a series of themes affecting social values to be identified. The results showed general support for the tourism development of archaeological sites. However, this came together with some criticism of the project, mainly related to the business model applied, characterised by a large involvement of private investment. The tension over what should be prioritised in the transformation of an archaeological site into a tourist attraction is the main finding of Gao's research, with the strain between the social and economic values being the most controversial.

Gao's article is followed by Georgios Alexopoulos and Kalliopi Fouseki's study exploring the challenges arising from the confrontation between universal and local values, which they analyse in the case of Mount Athos in Greece. The inscription as World Heritage of a property from which women are barred calls into question the contradictory uses of the concept of human rights. Thus, the right of the members of a monastic order to define its rules conflicts with those of women to access a cultural site considered to be of universal importance. In the case of World Heritage one could go even further and wonder whether such a property, which was included on the list in 1988, follows the recommendations made, as discussed above, in the 2008 Operational Guidelines.

Guttormsen, Taylor and Swensen look at transnational properties and raise questions on whether such properties achieve what they intend: to create a shared cultural heritage which is inclusive to all peoples. By looking at a series of case studies – the Santiago de Compostela Pilgrim Route, the European Route of Industrial Heritage, and the Silk Roads WH properties – they made a series of criticisms. A key one refers to the sanitisation of history, which is clearly convenient for the commercial rhetoric that allows these sites to be sustainable, although not necessarily inclusive. They argue that the heritagisation of past peoples'

movement in space has, in contrast to what was intended, become a resource for the legitimization of present-day geopolitical ideologies and established cultural-political connections.

A further example of the way in which public participation is implemented in World Heritage nominations is provided by Matthias Maluck in the ensuing article. The author explains that, despite UNESCO's best intentions, the old practices have hardly changed and consequently the integration of local communities into the nomination process is far from complete. Contrasting with this situation, the author explains what actions have been implemented in the nomination process in which he is currently involved, that of the "Viking Age Sites in Northern Europe" transnational serial nomination for World Heritage. This includes the archaeological sites of Gokstad, Oseberg and Borre (Norway), Jelling (Denmark) and Danevirke and Hedeby (Germany). He argues that the inclusion of local community participation in municipal planning in relation to land-use plans and urban plans is the way in which UNESCO's wishes can be put into operation. In the "Viking Age Sites in Northern Europe", public participation has been put into action through workshops and other meetings, as well as public hearings. Maluck ends his article by suggesting that the participation of communities in the nomination process has increased the level of protection for these sites.

The next author, Dennis Rodwell, contrasts community and World Heritage values arguing that the common perception held of local communities by heritage specialists is to consider them a threat to the authenticity of WH properties. In his view this indicates that changes are needed in how heritage and values are defined. Through a series of examples, he shows that the museological approach, so fashionable in the 1950s and 60s, led to a sanitisation of these monuments. In their management, only the artistic and historical values of heritage properties were considered and, as a consequence, local communities living in or around the sites, or using them for trade or other purposes, were asked to abandon the area. This had the effect of restricting their use, which has limited the willingness of potential patrons to invest in their restoration and maintenance. He maintains that the word "heritage" should include some of the semantic field of the French term "*patrimoine*", which implies collective inheritance passed down through generations, and an essential element is that it remains useful for the community. The term "community value", in turn, should incorporate the sense of place, belonging and well-being. He also wonders about who should be considered an expert and suggests that the term "stakeholder" should be subdivided into three major types: direct users,

indirect users and influential actors (including government and academics). Rodwell ends his article proposing that human residents should be included in the way authenticity and integrity are defined.

The dossier ends with Gian Pietro Brogiolo's critical analysis of the UNESCO network "The Longobards in Italy. Places of Power (568-774 A.D.)". He first describes the long and complex process that took place between 1996 and 2011 and that led to its inclusion as Property 1318 on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The author argues that the minimal input of experts in the process, limited only to their collaboration in an exhibition first shown in 2000, led to inaccurate and even incorrect information being included in the documentation submitted to UNESCO. Silenced in it were the data on the complexities identified by experts in the interpretation of the sites, which even challenge their classification as Longobard. Partly to blame for this was the choice of a professional journalist and expert in cultural and socio-economic development projects to draw up the project. Nevertheless, Brogiolo admits that academics' usual lack of skill in writing texts other than academic papers partly explains why this happened. The examination of how the city of Brescia got involved in the nomination process is used as an excuse to highlight the many complexities of these processes in practice.