

Critical Heritage Studies: Restorative Justice, Digital Ethics and the Governance of Sustainability

Keywords

Sustainable development goals; equality and inclusion; socio-environmental and restorative justice; human right to cultural heritage; digital humanities; ecologies of practice

Main Research Objective

The research cluster will open avenues for academic exchange and new opportunities for collaboration on the role and use of heritage in multicultural societies and environmental transitions, as a tool of resilience to mitigate the effects of social trauma, migration and climate change, and as a vehicle for restorative justice, equality and sustainable futures for peoples, communities and territories.

Given the inherently interdisciplinary nature of the field, the challenge is to identify theoretical and methodological approaches that enable the generation of new, self-reflexive and policy-oriented knowledge, to unpack definitions of what heritage is and when it happens, and to assess how cultural pathways, participatory governance and digital media could stimulate the emergence of alternative and dissonant heritage communities.

Cluster members are well placed to take up this challenge through a deep engagement with heritage and sustainability across the humanities and social sciences. By integrating critical heritage studies, legal philosophy, best practices in community management and sustainable business models, the cluster aims to enhance internal and external collaboration with research partners and to increase the attractiveness of ERUA for students and early career researchers, as well as its impact on the wider scientific community and the general public.

Main Research Outcome

- 1) Lay the groundwork for a joint degree in Critical Heritage Studies through the production of a report on heritage as a teaching and research subject across ERUA universities.
- 2) Build and share knowledge on interdisciplinary methodologies and comparative perspectives on community-based archaeological heritage practices and the global/local governance of environmental transition by organising an edited book seminar with contributions from cluster members and external participants, and a roundtable with internal and invited speakers.
- 3) Improve training opportunities for postgraduate students and early career researchers through the organisation of a workshop on the ethics and politics of digital heritage and the cluster's lecture series on the ecological dimension of human rights.
- 4) Foster collaborative actions between cluster participants, such as submitting a session proposal to an international conference (e.g. ACHS 2026) and publishing the proceedings of the conference session as a special issue of an international peer-reviewed journal or as a collective book, which may further lead to the preparation of joint applications for research grants, teaching and postdoctoral mobility.

Contact Person

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Team of the Cluster	<p><i>Scientific Coordinators</i></p> <p>Dr Francesca Bartolacci, Associate Professor, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Rumen Petrov, Associate Professor, New Bulgarian University</p> <p><i>Principal Investigators</i></p> <p>Dr Despina Catapoti, Assistant Professor, University of the Aegean</p> <p>Dr Riccardo Mazzola, Assistant Professor, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Francesco Orlandi, Research Fellow, University of Macerata</p> <p><i>Team Members</i></p> <p>Dr Mara Cerquetti, Associate Professor, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Michela Soverchia, Associate Professor, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Carmen Vitale, Senior Researcher, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Arianna Maceratini, Senior Researcher, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Polina Nikolaou, Research Fellow, University of the Aegean</p> <p>Margarita K. Chomatianou, PhD Candidate, University of the Aegean</p> <p>Martina Tullio, PhD Candidate, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Concetta Ferrara, Research Fellow, University of Macerata</p> <p>Giulia Lapucci, PhD Candidate, University of Macerata</p> <p>Dr Despina Andriopoulou, Research Fellow, University of the Aegean</p> <p>The cluster is open to the participation of new members who are interested in the proposed lines of research</p>
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External Partners	<p>Dr Marisa Lazzari, Director of the Centre for the Archaeology of the Americas, University of Exeter, co-organiser of the edited book seminar “Frictions and Intersections in Archaeological Heritage Practices: Contrasting Histories, Perspectives and Experiences across Local/Global Settings”</p> <p>Dr Peter Bille Larsen, Director of the Geneva Heritage Lab, University of</p>
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	Geneva, participant in the roundtable “Sustainable Business Models, Participatory Management and Heritage Commons for the Environmental Transition”
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