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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Public Engagement as a Community Empowerment Approach in Archaeology and Heritage Practice: A Case Study from Sirwan Valley in Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract

Public engagement practises in archaeology and heritage studies vary widely in different countries. While such practices are very common in UK and a few European countries, it is often poorly studied and applied in southwest Asia. Although archaeologists increasingly emphasise on public engagement, there is still a gap between how we, archaeologists traditionally study historic landscapes in southwest Asia and the lived experiences of local communities. This unequal approach excludes local communities of any contribution to archaeological projects including its production and dissemination. Taking Sirwan River valley in Iraqi Kurdistan as case study and drawing on the archaeological research of the Sirwan Regional Project (SRP), I will address this gap by presenting a new perspective of an old practice in heritage and archaeology: Family Day at the Museum. By highlighting the advantages of this approach, first, I review the family day event organized as part of the second fieldwork of my PhD research in the Museum of Garmian with collaboration of antiquity directorate of Garmian, then I discuss how the dissemination of existing knowledge could attach importance to their lesser-known aspects of public engagement and why the community contribution assists personal and community empowerment as a whole.

Keywords

public engagement, heritage and archaeology, community engagement, Museum, Iraqi Kurdistan

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