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RESEARCH

Coastal and maritime cultural heritage: from the European Union to East Asia and Latin America

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Abstract
Introducing the *Special Collection on Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage*, this article focuses on the cultural heritage of coastal regions and maritime cultures and presents a summary of threats and topics found in recent cultural heritage research, especially around the themes of governance, resilience, transformation, and power (including gender and marginalization). Cultural heritage (CH) is a super-concept: it connects a wide diversity of heritage types (tangible and intangible), and cuts across a variety of public policies. Yet coastal and maritime cultural heritage (CMCH) faces risks from conflicts, environmental hazards, and from a neglect arising from lack of understanding and consideration of its value. Additional risks from governmental Blue Growth policies and economic factors put CH at even greater risk. As cultural heritage is increasingly being tapped for its economic importance in development and tourism– and neglected in maritime policy– greater scholarly understandings and conceptualization of CMCH are needed. This special collection is one step in the direction towards further understandings, protections, and utilization of CH for coastal societies and culture. As economic valuations increase, however, we should not forget that cultural heritage in and of itself holds intrinsic value. Looking across Europe and the world, coastal peoples' cultural heritage tells us a story of generations of linkages and bonds with coastal environments. Such CH imparts a sense of place and belonging to people, and connects people to one another, their pasts, and their futures. We hope this *Special Collection* provides a sense of the beauty of CMCH and inspires further exploration and research around this super-concept.

Keywords Coastal cultural heritage · Maritime cultural heritage · Resilience · Governance · Methods

Introduction

Social scientists working in coastal, maritime, and fisheries communities have long investigated and described aspects of culture in their research which can be categorized as coastal or maritime cultural heritage. The narratives in such research contains, for example, various descriptions from fish sheds, to women's roles in the fisheries, to boat building techniques, and fishing gears; to keepers of lighthouses, descriptions of fish processing and oral histories of livelihood activities, these all revolve around coastal cultural relationships. Indeed, coastal residents' and ocean-going peoples' relationships with one another and their coasts and seas form community and individual identities, and in so doing, further generate living coastal and maritime cultural heritage.

We define coastal and maritime cultural heritage (CH) as the material and immaterial cultural attributes of coastal or maritime-connected groups which have been inherited from previous generations. A key point to be made about CH is that it has persisted over time. Such endurance indicates an implicit value placed on it by cultural members and may show special, localized aesthetic values. Critically, the heritage connects cultural community members to one another and their local environments and provides a sense of identity. Intangible culture is often difficult to comprehend but it generally includes, for example, knowledge and skills such as with building boats, processes involved in sewing distinct clothes, singing songs, and relating stories. Cultural Heritage is a concept which offers a bridge between the past and

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the future with the application of particular approaches in the present day. Due to its attached values for these groups or societies, cultural heritage is maintained in the present and bequeathed for the benefit of future generations. A 700-year-old festival in Miyagi, Japan, for example, is most likely not celebrated the same today as in the 13th Century when it was founded. Indeed, in recent years, the *kami* (god/spirit) brought down from the mountains to be bathed in the sea was brought down in a *mikoshi* (portable shrine) in a *kei* truck rather than a boat (fieldnotes, 2015; Kimura 2016). Nevertheless, the festival persists into the 21st Century in some form as it holds value to the coastal residents of the area.

Research on these social and cultural aspects of coastal and maritime cultural heritage is vast and can be found over decades of research and across multiple disciplinary fields including anthropology, archaeology, cultural and heritage studies, and geography (e.g., see Brumann 2014; Chio 2022; Jones 2009; Meskell 2015; Vecco 2010). In the past, much of the work was siloed in nature, but recent years have seen increased interdisciplinarity and the borrowing of methods. As Meskell points out, "The particular focus on materiality with which archaeology is synonymous, and which anthropology has more recently adopted, provides an appropriate methodology for taking heritage seriously… An ethnographic sensibility has also emerged around heritage work as methodology to connect the lived experiences… with broader international policies and politics" (2015: 2). Anthropology-related CH research, though it can be the focus, is often spread throughout other topical research (e.g., women and fisheries, governance, or ethnology) and related journals and often may not focus on the heritage itself. In the 1980s research on heritage primarily focused on management with the 1990s still witness to heritage being synonymous with castles and manors in an, often, static manner (Meskell 2015).

The concept of cultural heritage is also one of specific meaning to particular disciplinary groups and thus definitions and understanding can vary. Historically, especially in Europe and the United Kingdom, for example, heritage most often referred to tangible, built heritage, not intangible heritage (Brumann 2015). Furthermore, preservation was the prevailing view rather than finding new uses for heritage, such as with hard structures (e.g., port warehouses turned to flats or restaurants), ideas (e.g., use of sea shanties in art and memes), and tourism development.

As attention on cultural heritage has grown, so have the instruments naming and protecting it. Indeed, much of these came about as a result of loss and threatened loss (Brumann 2015). And again, tended to focus on tangible heritage, the government of Japan's naming of intangible cultural property and "national living treasures" (e.g., individuals who possess unique folkcraft skills and knowledge) is a significant exception for intangible heritage (Vecco 2010). Intangible cultural heritage remained outside of international conventions for decades longer, with the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage not passed by UNESCO until 2003[1] (Ounanian et al. 2021). Cultural heritage, like culture itself, is incredibly broad and though we could not possibly present the full breadth of current research, this *Maritime Studies Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage Special Collection* presents examples of some of the most recent work on-going in social science research in Europe and around the world. Focusing on shared themes --resilience, space and place, and power– and distinctive methods and creative adaptation, the issue highlights the wealth of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and experience in European and the world's coastal and maritime zones.

Cultural heritage

In 2014, the Council of Europe chose cultural heritage to serve as a "strategic resource for a sustainable Europe." [2] In so doing, it was acknowledged that "cultural heritage plays an important role in creating and enhancing social capital, has broad, economic impacts, and can be used in goals for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (CEU 2014). Cultural heritage is what we (authors) consider a "super-concept." Like a superfood which is packed with an inordinate amount of nutrients in a single package, the single, super-concept of cultural heritage cuts across public policies beyond the cultural, and includes those "related to regional development, social cohesion, agriculture, maritime affairs, environment, tourism, education, the digital agenda, research and innovation" (CEU 2014: 2).

Yet, what precisely is "cultural heritage"? Simply put, cultural heritage is the tangible and intangible aspects of culture which have been passed down through time and generations and, as a consequence, are viewed as containing value. In terms of generally accepted understandings, "cultural heritage" stems from heritage preservations,

[1] Small steps were taken towards protecting intangible CH through international conventions over the years such as through the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore of 1989, the Nara Convention authenticity in relation to world heritage, the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity of 2001, and in the Istanbul Declaration of 2002.

[2] Council of the European Union, Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable.Europe, 20 May 2014,http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/educ/142705.pdf.CEU 2014. "Conclusions on cultural heritage as a strategic resource for a sustainable.Europe." Council of the European Union.

researchers and practitioners whereby such "heritage" arises from tangible and material objects, including built structures, which by virtue of their remaining over time and through history, hold value. Though not always explicitly understood or acknowledged, by virtue of it remaining over time and being valued, such heritage in this form often tended to belong to elites and wealthy classes. Cultural heritage was often traditionally viewed in the West as tangible (Ahmad 2006) (e.g., a wooden fishing boat), today however, intangible cultural heritage (e.g., the knowledge for making the fishing boat) is increasingly being recognized. The inclusion of intangible cultural heritage not only acknowledges the importance of other types of heritage, but also often acknowledges value of other groups, ethnicities, and classes, and genders. The omission of such groups is often at the center of research by those in critical heritage studies who often focus on the socio-political processes of heritage designation (Chio 2022).

Conceptualising coastal and maritime culture heritage

Often rooted in specific seascapes, stories, buildings, language, and traditions, cultural heritage is a critically important part of coastal societies and cultures. It connects people to each other and to history, social values, beliefs, religions, customs, and worldviews from the past—and helps guide their cultural and economic futures. Place identity and people's 'place in the world' can often be tied to cultural heritage (Nadel-Klein 2020; Ferreira da Silva 2022 citing Delaney 2020a). Cultural heritage also involves communities of practice (Ounanian et al. 2021) and shared values. The loss of cultural heritage can weaken people's attachments with one another, their history, and with society, thereby increasing strife and a sense of *anomie* and decreasing cooperation and sense of identity. Alternatively, cultural heritage, can be the catalyst for strengthening identity, resolve, and revitalization, such as found in the support given for the revival of local folk dances and cultural heritage activities following the tsunami generated by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake (see, e.g., Kaneko 2020; Kimura 2016; Takakura 2023; Delaney 2024).

Coastal cultural landscapes and communities form the crossroads of peoples, connecting each other with other regions and with the world, whether that be from commerce to conquest, from cultural exchange to mass tourism. As such, they represent an extremely rich tangible heritage seen through coastal towns and villages, submerged landscapes and underwater artefacts, harbours, dams, light houses, arsenals, buildings of the fishing and marine industry, boat builders, and the like. As a result of the combination of geological features found naturally and human ingeniousness applied to them, specific coastal cultural landscapes emerged on the shores (e.g., Van Tilburg 2014) and seabeds (e.g., Saiji 2023) which include unique types of transcultural communication and ethnic diversity. This tangible heritage is intimately embedded into multiple layers of intangible heritage, from language and cultural traditions to myths and songs to arts and crafts of local cultures of communities of, for example, sailors, Scottish "herring lasses", and boat builders.

Today this rich heritage of coastal cultural landscapes is at particular at risk due to environmental and economic challenges such as climate change, pollution, development, urbanisation, pressure from tourism, the transformation of the fishing industries due to falling fish stocks and disjointed policies of sea or shore conservation at national, EU, and international levels (Delaney 2020a). Coastal zones are typically the among the densest populated areas in the world; half the world's population lives within 60 km of the sea, and three-quarters of all large cities are located on the coast (Geographer Online. n.d.) In Europe, over 40% of the EU-27 population lived in coastal regions (EEA 2013). Many mixed metropolitan-coastal landscapes have emerged around historic port cities which pose new challenges for conservation, management and transmission of existing tangible and intangible values.

Competition for marine space and the cumulative impact of human activities on marine ecosystems and cultural landscapes require a collaborative and integrated approach to the wide range of policy areas affecting maritime issues. This century has seen a rise in the EU policies and directives which can both impact and support coastal cultural heritage, including the Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP), the Marine Strategy Framework Directive, Maritime Spatial Planning, and Integrated Coastal Zone Management (pushed for by the European Parliament since 2002). The aim of the IMP is to maximise the sustainable use of oceans and seas, enhance Europe's knowledge and innovation potential in maritime affairs, ensure development and sustainable growth in coastal regions, strengthen Europe's maritime leadership and raise the profile of maritime Europe. This policy stresses the importance of coastal regions due to their geographic location and aims to develop sea basin strategies.

Tourism in coastal regions can provide employment opportunities and also contribute to regional development and economic and social integration. The European Commission recognised the importance of maritime and coastal tourism as a catalyst for economic development and encourages tourism development as part of an integrated maritime policy. Coastal tourism, for example, is a sector of the Blue Economy which involved more than 2.8 million people and accounts for annual revenues of over €231 billion (EU Maritime Forum n.d.). Yet, with development comes risks.

Protection and advocacy for cultural heritage can strengthen identity and local society, thereby improving overall quality of life and economic opportunities. Culture and heritage are imperatives for the healthy and robust development of any society. Furthermore, "Cultural heritage must be seen as a special, but integral, component in the production of European GDP and innovation, its growth process, competitiveness and in the welfare of European society. Like environmental protection, it should be mainstreamed into policy and regarded as a production factor in economic and wider policy development" (Gelonch 2015:1).

Indeed, cultural heritage has a vital role to play in sustainable development. Throughout Europe, the contribution of cultural heritage to sustainable development has been critical, especially in the cities and landscapes (Thurley et al. 2015). "More holistic management of the environment, bringing cultural and natural heritage together in single systems, has resulted in greater efficiencies and improved quality of life" (Thurley et al. 2015: 7).

As a living concept, cultural heritage is a part of local and regional culture. Local cultural members, stakeholders and end-users must be included in work to strengthen and protect heritage. Scientists and practitioners value cultural heritage, but locals live and breathe it and their identities are formed by it. Their knowledge, connection, and enthusiasm must be included in any work on cultural heritage and provided with ways to channel their knowledge and creativity into cultural heritage research (Delaney 2020b).

Throughout the globe, maritime and coastal cultural regions are at the crossroads of connections and movements of diverse peoples and cultures. These coastal zones are also historically rich with unique land/seascapes, tangible artefacts, and intangible cultural heritage. Maritime and coastal cultural heritage (CH), rooted in specific landscapes, seascapes, buildings, stories, traditions, language, and cultural practices, is a fundamental part of society. It is based on the past, but it is also living—constantly changing and adapting—as all culture is. Yet, maritime and coastal CH is also at risk through diverse drivers, such as climate change, non-CH sensitive economic and spatial development, and demographic change. (Delaney 2020b). With calls for growth in different economic sectors, it is important to make explicit connections to the values of CH, the risks it faces and to the benefits to preserving and safeguarding CH for current and future generations. CH should not be conceptualized, in a static sense but include ongoing adaptation to new circumstances and opportunities, providing a springboard for sustainable exploitation. With due consideration, CH can be both preserved and sustainably utilized.

The glue that binds

The discussions in the articles presented in this Special Collection on *Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage* focus on a number of key themes of which we would like to highlight, particularly: resilience, governance, power/empowerment and transformation. From these, spring connected subthemes such as gender and marginalization. We present a brief discussion here as these are shared threads found throughout the articles.

The concept of resilience is closely connected with cultural heritage. By its very existence, extant cultural heritage (Flannery et al. 2022) is resilient, managing to have survived and continued over time enough to become heritage. Yet, through neglect, conflicts and wars, and now climate change, the continued resilience of cultural heritage is often in doubt. With these pressures and doubts, policies and protections emerged. Yet, how, and by whom, shall CH be protected? Who has a say? And whose heritage and voices will be heard? Thus, not only issues of governance come to the forefront, but also of power and empowerment. These three themes connect to the concept of transformation as the CH which remains may be altered. Whether transformation of the participation of cultural practitioners over time (e.g., from only men to mixed sexes) and events such as disasters (e.g., Delaney 2024; Klien 2016: Wilhelm 2005), or even with CH becoming frozen in time (e.g., from a UNESCO listing) and not evolving naturally as it may have otherwise, transformation remains another critical theme surrounding CMCH.

In addition to these key themes of resilience, governance, and transformation, in the following discussion, we also draw attention to the variety of methods used including visual/photo elicitation, discrete choice (value), oral history, space and place, and focus on species of fish to tease out data and understandings of CMCH.

Cultural Heritage research is often presented through materiality with actual items on display or with photos used to represent the heritage. Beyond documentation and providing examples and "back-ups" (e.g., in digital archives and in museums), photos can be used as a tool to elicit deeper thinking from participants (Antoniou et al. 2023), which also elicits meaning (Pafi et al. 2023). Photos can also support storytelling around the heritage (Antoniou et al. 2019) and photography can also provide context and key "details that, although visible, may become part of the wallpaper in the wider… view" (Levis 2024: 84; Shotton and Prizeman 2024).

In addition to visual methods, oral history can be used to both find and protect CMCH (Westerdahl 1980), as well as serve to bring in missing voices, details, and intangible CH (Frangoudes et al. 2023). Combined with photos, these can

be used to elicit values from local inhabitants and tie them to local social contexts. Such methods remain critical for such work around CMCH as documentation for planning, such as around the blue economy (Pafi et al. 2023) and in post-disaster contexts (Delaney 2023).

Connected with these innovative methods of data collection we find creative adaptation, such as through digital storytelling, which connects full circle back to the theme of transformation.

Resilience

Though the articles in this *Special Collection* focus on varying themes, all have resilience in the sense of an "on-going nature," as a backdrop given the critical connection cultural heritage has with the concept of time. Indeed, most of the authors in this *CMCH Special Collection* present CH as a continuous process: Rogelja et al. (2023) present "fish" as vehicle to assess how heritage as particular type of imaginary conveys social, cultural, political and economic transformations of the area; Flannery et al. (2022) provides a framework which allows for extant, dormant and transformed CH; Hansen et al. (2022) draws on this to show how CH contributes to reconstruction of narratives and identities related to dormant CH, creating new attractiveness of place. Continuing the time theme by tying the past to the present, Frangoudes et al. (2023) uses oral histories and other methods to fill in gaps of knowledge left from historical documentation. Hansen et al. (2022) also emphasises the planning and governance aspects which, like Pafi et al. (2023), presents how similar blue growth-oriented economic development can affect local identities. Macias et al. (2023) also looks into development, in this case tourism, and how digital tools can bridge fishing CH and tourism. As the question of continuation comes to the fore, Ounanian and Howells (2022) examine the maintenance of knowledge (ICH) for clinker boatbuilding in Nordic countries.

Within this continuous process, some articles focus on CH as being at risk, and thus resilience discussions focus on supporting and saving the CH into the future. Particularly given the prominence of climate change impacts in the popular press and academic research, discussions of resilience are put center stage. This is in contrast to traditional heritage studies which argue for preservation of "pure" CH, grown out from the care of built architecture. Flannery et al. (2022), in particular, draw from Holtorff (2018) to focus on "evolving" heritage to develop a framework for steering resilience of coastal and maritime cultural heritage. In the manner of the anthropological concept of cultural as ever-changing, Flannery et al. (2022) aim to increase people's acceptance of the transformation of CH. Tied to this is the importance of effective forms of participation and "potential" heritage (through transformation). Flannery et al. also focus on the deliberative governance aspect here, a view which can be seen in local level, anthropological studies, as well. For example, following the impacts of the tsunami generated by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake, Klien (2016) demonstrates that "practitioners play an essential role in redefining the nature of [CH] performances in the wake of the earthquake and that the adaptation of the performance to changing circumstances helps to maintain its relevance" (2016: 359). Klien further argues, as Flannery et al. (2022) do with potential CH, that the concept of "the authenticity of practitioners" -- a concept used to understand folk performing arts as evolving rather than static, "authentic" cultural phenomena– remains key.

Governance

In recent years, researchers, activists, stakeholders, and governments are increasingly working towards preserving and protecting coastal and maritime cultural heritage. Such moves tie into greater understandings of the value of CH on a variety of levels and connects to important concepts of governance (including spatial governance), power/empowerment, and transformation. Governance measures can be local, regional, national and EU-level, include actions from local movements to the passage of EU and international conventions.

Given the nature of CMCH, space remains a key concept underlying governance, which, given the nature of heritage can be said to morph into "place." Space is a geographic concept as it encompasses physical locations and geography; it can also be quantitatively measured. Place on the other hand, is a cultural and social construct; place develops through the meanings people ascribe to locations. As such, place matters to people (Harvey 1993).

In the Western world, sea and ocean spaces, including coastal zones, are often viewed as open access without ownership, following the Dutch jurist Grotius' publication (1609) of *Mare Liberum* ("the Free Sea") in which he argued that the sea belonged to all. Despite the argument that the oceans are free, the resources found therein are a different matter. Interest in the seas over the centuries tended to focus on environmental and economic needs (Gee 2019). Consequently, ocean-related governance legislation and plans also traditionally fell along these lines, passed with the purpose to either protect or profit from ocean natural resources. The rise of the EU's Maritime Spatial Planning (MSP) and Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP) (2014), and subsequent push for a Blue Economy, are examples of this mindset.

What tends to be missing from these conceptualizations are the human, cultural aspect of seas, oceans, and coastal connections. The sea and coasts can be places, with people

holding strong attachments. Residents of coastal communities, especially those who fish and gather ocean resources often hold a strong sense of belonging. Frangoudes et al. (2023) alludes to such identities while others have written to its importance more explicitly (e.g., Delaney 2023, 2024; MacKinnon and Brennan 2012). "The sea is thus just as much a place as the land, with subjectivity of place not only arising from direct use of the marine environment but also imagery and traditional knowledge" (Gee 2019:40). As the importance of oceans and coasts for culture and society, including the related cultural heritage, became better understood, new legislation and conventions have been passed, conflicting in some ways with other plans, such as the European Union's Integrated Maritime Policy (IMP).

Such conflicts highlight issues of agency, power, and empowerment. Who has the ability to participate and speak up (Escobar 2017)? Who has a role in decision making? Whose voices are being heard? Pafi et al. (2023) provides a discussion of the challenges of locals having input as they contest various Blue Growth projects in Ireland. In this case, the authors argue for an empowerment of sort for locals, which would include the investment in "knowledge, assets, networks, and skills." Ounanian and Howells (2022), in their article on ICH of Nordic "clinker" boatbuilding point out that in the European Union, "State (government) interventions can obscure the multiple layers of governance: among member states, and within countries (central, regional, local authorities, and jurisdictions). In the case study in question (Denmark and Scandinavia), the municipal level holds fairly high decision-making powers, yet impacts to the living ICH, is affected by legislation and regulations at multiple levels (e.g., EU fisheries policy).

Hansen et al. (2022), on the other hand, presents a case of the efforts of local stakeholders to use the CH concept to reconstruct place narratives and identities in local and regional strategies and plans. Given the relatively little research conducted on CMCH in spatial policy and planning, Hansen et al. (2022) provide valuable insights from their case studies in Scotland, France, Northern Ireland and Denmark, not least due to each case being representative of different stages in the governance process. Key issues included multiple stakeholder voices, what is the CH to be used for, and how to balance CH-related needs to that of other needs (e.g., profit-oriented development). As a part of this is the need for planning for participatory strategies, leading us back to power and empowerment viewpoints.

Power/empowerment

A critical point to come out of many of the articles in this *Special Collection* is the acknowledgement of there being a variety of stakeholders. In some development projects, such as the development of Belfast Harbour for tourism, some local microculture voices were marginalized at the expense of other stories (Flannery et al. 2022). In other cases, the role of certain groups, including along gender lines, can also be overlooked, as seen in Frangoudes et al. (2023).

Traditional consultation of projects often involves a component of citizen input but, as Hansen et al. (2022) argue, the style of involvement is critical. "Citizens are not just there to be enrolled and co-opted in formal decision-making, but also [must be] empowered and recognized" (2022: 433) such as for their skills and knowledge. As their Danish and French case studies showed, ongoing and meaningful engagement through deliberative participatory exercises and between a purposefully differentiated crowd of stakeholders and citizens is vital. Such inclusion can not only generate CH insights, but also provide strengthened alliances and share identities. Undertaken with formal actors, this can build common agendas and influence spatial planning when involving local stakeholders and authorities; it can also spark reflection on the participatory methods (Hansen et al. 2022).

These calls for open stakeholder collaborations also highlight the dominance of certain voices over others, as shown in Flannery et al. (2022), Macias et al. (2023) and Pafi et al. (2023), and the need for better inclusivity. The dominance of limited voices is tied with power dominance, critical issues as we look at the rise of Blue Growth and Blue Transformation agendas (see, e.g., Pafi et al. 2023). Such dominance is often historical with authors calling for better inclusion of stakeholders and gender roles (Frangoudes et al. 2023); Perez-Alvaro 2023; Ounanian and Howells 2022).

Overcoming such dominance can be challenging, but realization is the first step. Velho points out, that yes, indeed "every cultural policy is inserted within a field of power, complete with interests, factions and often conflicts" (2012: 148) but argues that research and reflection can lead us to an effective policy of knowledge through inclusivity. Moving beyond the local level, international conventions also play a role in giving a voice to groups and their CMCH knowledge (see. e.g., Frangoudes et al. 2023; Ounanian et al. 2021; Ounanian and Howells 2022), and providing some protections.

In some cases, however, the international conventions replicate the hegemony of colonialism and state-centric systems by failing to protect indigenous rights to underwater cultural heritage, as detailed in Perez-Alvaro (2023), an article which speaks to human rights and (de)constructs international conventions around underwater cultural heritage. The paper highlights not only the need for increased local engagement but also calls for the empowerment of indigenous voices and worldviews, a sort of indigenization rather than simple decolonialization.

Empowerment is also related to the question of who is responsible for safeguarding CH. Ounanian and Howells (2022), in their focus on intangible CH (ICH) around clinker (wooden) boats, bring up the question of responsibility for needed interventions in safeguarding the knowledge around boat building. In this, they discuss how "the clinker boat-building knowledge highlights the complexity of CMCH in its spread over various policy domains—culture, fisheries, local development, education, tourism—and geographic scales" (2022: 422). Indeed, the history of clinker boats is extensive and has persevered over millennia, evolving over time from innovations related to local, environmental constraints, adaptations to different fisheries and, more recently, in recreational and leisure uses. Unlike the preservation of boats in museums, the clinker boat tradition is a living one which requires on-going innovation and creativity for building fit-for-purpose working (fishing) vessels. The authors thus uncover a potential blind spot in UNESCO's ICH designations and efforts: as an industrial craft, "supporting the education of new boat builders through years of apprenticeships and apprentice-like roles as a necessity to safeguard the intergenerational transmission of knowledge between those that embody the clinker craft" (2022: 421). Critically, as the tradition (knowledge) is one of living heritage, there are competing aesthetic and industrial values, an issue which, they argue, calls for investigation into the "fit for purpose" aspect of UNESCO's heritage frameworks.

Methods and methodologies

In addition to standard, qualitative fieldwork methods which include interviewing, workshops, and focus groups, articles in this *CMCH Special Collection* present some creative ways of uncovering and discussing CMCH. Two unique methodologies used include utilizing discrete choice analysis (Martino et al. 2023) and ethnographies of fish species (Rogelja et al. 2023). Martino et al. (2023), after realizing there was limited quantitative analysis (monetary valuation) of the influence of maritime heritage on people's choices, undertook a choice experiment on seafood preferences to elicit cultural and heritage values of fishing. Their results add weight to branding and tourism movements which build on the idea of preferences for locally caught fish (see, e.g., Delaney and Yagi 2017; Pascual-Fernández et al. 2019) increase value.

An inspired methodology undertaken by Rogelja et al. (2023) involved using a critical heritage approach through the ethnography of two fish species to assess the ways in which a cultural heritage discourse can convey sociocultural, political, and economic transformations in coastal regions. In this case, wild mullet and farmed seabass highlight competing and complementary discourses in the Northeastern Adriatic Sea. Though mullet is view as traditional and economically small, it plays an outsized role in regional politics; farmed seabass is a symbol for blue growth transformations. Together, they both highlight the desires for livelihoods and presentation of local identities along the Slovenian coast.

In addition to these unique methodologies, the articles in this *Special Collection* also used inspired methods such as using visuals and photo elicitation, oral history, and digital storytelling. Pafi et al. used photo elicitation as a primary field method for elicitation on local view on seascape changes. The methods were "chosen to enable the community groups to reflect on their own experiences and concerns while collecting rich data that can open a meaningful dialogue about important community issues and visions" (2023: 28). By using photo-elicitation in community focus groups, the researchers were able to uncover local values and perspectives related to the coast and tie them to their social contexts in a way which cannot be as easily done with straightforward individual interviews. In this case, the photo-elicitation mapped what heritage assets were important to communities and highlighted how their relationships embedded in their places were perceived as being threatened by Blue Growth initiatives (Pafi et al. 2023).

The use of photos and visuals used by locals were also analyzed by Rogelja et al. (2023). In this case, the photos were not only signifiers of past community life around mullet, but also as adding legitimacy to the more newly farmed seabass activities. Frangoudes et al. (2023), though focusing on oral history, provides discussion on how oral history gives depth and detail to historical visual sources (e.g., paintings, woodblock prints, postcards, and photographs) on women's participation in fisheries.

Connected with methods, we find creative and co-created CMCH outputs in the form of digital storytelling in Macias et al. (2023). In this case, researchers worked with local stakeholders to understand how cultural heritage-based experiences can be co-created through digital platforms using an action research approach. The focus was on audio tours, but it relied on mapping and provides photos and visuals on its platform. The authors concluded that digital platforms such as they used (izi.TRAVEL) can be utilized for collaborative governance in tourism develop and can empower local communities in the process.

Conclusion

Focusing on the cultural heritage of coastal regions and communities, and maritime-related cultures and industries, this *Coastal and Maritime Cultural Heritage Special Collection* unites the CH articles found herein to underscore central

themes newly risen around the "super-concept" of cultural heritage. CMCH faced risks over the decades and generations from not only war and conflicts—which is what first made Western decision-makers concerned about loss– but also from the neglect arising from lack of understanding and consideration of its value. In more recent years, risks from environmental (e.g., climate change, pollution), policy (e.g., development, fisheries and environmental ocean policies), and economic (e.g., rise of neoliberal capitalism, urban development, mass tourism) factors put CH at greater risk. In particular, focus on society's economic needs around ocean and coastal resources put heritage on the backburner so-to-speak. As ocean-related governance legislation and plans arose in recent decades, these also fell along the lines of either protecting the environment or profiting from coastal and oceanic natural resources (e.g., the EU's MSP and IMP); the most recent push for Blue Growth and the Blue Economy serves as stark illustrations of this mindset, which often provides for little space for CH.

This push for profits or protections (e.g., marine protected areas) overlooks the importance of the cultural heritage found in coastal and maritime zones for people, cultures and society. The sea and coasts are places where local peoples and communities hold strong attachments and identities based on a sense of belonging from lived and historical experiences. From this, specific knowledge and skills developed, including aspects of culture such as folk songs, boat building skills, and seafood culture. Tangible, material culture also developed, such as specific dress, tools, and architecture.

There are often conflicts between Blue Growth agendas and protecting and utilizing cultural heritage. Such conflicts can highlight issues of resilience, agency, power, and empowerment. Who has the ability to speak up? Who holds decision making roles? Whose voices are being heard?

Consequently, this *Special Collection* highlights the common threads found within the articles of governance, power and empowerment, resilience, sustainability, and transformation. Related to the key themes, the subthemes of gender and marginalization sprang forth emphasizing the power and empowerment aspect. In addition, we highlight the variety of methods used by the CMCH researchers including visual/photo elicitation, discrete choice valuation, oral history, and ethnographies of fish species to tease out data and understandings on CMCH. Novel methods provide both unique data collection techniques, and inventive methodologies which enable the conceptualization and presentation of CH in creative ways, such as through co-creation through digital storytelling.

Cultural heritage is increasingly being tapped for its economic importance in development and economic booms related to tourism even as it faces risks from development and climate change. Thus, understandings and conceptualization of CMCH are needed. This special collection is one step in that direction for further understandings, protections, and utilization of CH for coastal societies and culture. We found that, despite the importance of CH one of the largest sectors in Blue Growth (in the EU), i.e., tourism, CMCH is not provided space within policies such as the Marine Spatial Planning (MSP). Scholars need to create this such as through conducting research and participating in collaborative studies.

We should not forget, however, that culture heritage in and of itself holds intrinsic value. Looking across Europe and the world, coastal peoples' cultural heritage tells us a story of generations of linkages and bonds with coastal environments. Such CH imparts a sense of place and belonging to people; it connects people to one another, to the past, and can help guide our future (Delaney 2020a). Indeed, coastal residents' and ocean-going peoples' relationships with one another and their coasts and seas form community and individual identities, and in so doing, further generates coastal and maritime cultural heritage. We hope this *Special Collection* provides a sense of the beauty and value of CMCH and inspires further exploration and research around this super-concept.

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Declarations

On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author states that there is no conflict of interest.

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