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Title: Collecting and Documenting objects of a disputed heritage

This paper examines the process of collection, documentation and exhibition of objects related to political exile in Greece, through the example of two grassroots initiatives. Memory of 20<sup>th</sup> century political persecutions and discrimination has long been suppressed and silenced in Greece. Official documents were often destroyed not only by individuals (under the fear of being accused or arrested) but also by governments in the name of National Reconciliation based on the collective forgetfulness. Against this trend, some individuals and collectivities resisted oblivion and started collecting items related to that period. This resulted to the making not only of unique and valuable collections but also to important networks of trust which created nodes and nucleus of memory.

Based on two case studies, a community museum about political internment and a private collection of photographs related to exile on Ikaria, this paper argues that these grassroots initiatives accomplish two distinct but interrelated goals: the specific way in which these collections are made leads necessarily to the making of a memory community while at the same time the members of this community serve as the main sources of providing and documenting objects. Based on empirical research and long-term ethnographic work, we will present these unique cases of collecting and documenting objects of traumatic heritage.