

SYMPOSIUM

TRANSFORMATIONS AND APPLICATIONS OF FOLKLORISTIC AND ETHNOLOGICAL KNOWLEDGE

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON PUBLIC PRACTICE



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SYMPOSIUM CONCEPT

For the past half-century, government and civil society institutions have been created which apply folkloristic and ethnological knowledge to enable the safeguarding and sustainability of traditional cultures. Heritage programs situated in government and civil society institutions may reinforce misconceptions and/or engage academic and lay scholars in bringing their knowledge to broad public audiences. While these programs are uniquely shaped by their national and political contexts, they are also influenced by transnational entanglements, drawing on, adapting and circulating practices, methodologies, and frameworks from other regions and countries. Ethnologists and folklorists engage as experts, practitioners and policy advisors, bringing into focus issues of academic privilege, role conflict, shared authority and the dissemination and application of scholarship.

This interdisciplinary conference will engage critical and historically informed perspectives on how folkloristic and ethnological knowledge has been applied, transformed, and operationalized by circulating through heritage regimes. Attendees can participate in person or online. The conference will include a field trip to the Salagon Abbey Ethnobotany Research Centre and encounters with local individuals and associations involved in heritage.

Historical approaches are particularly insightful when retracing the manifold, dispersed and stratified trajectories of different cultures and forms of knowledge systems and academic scholarship. Such analysis illuminates how scholarship and local knowledge is utilized and shared in the public sphere. This convening will consider both how heritage policy and practice may contribute to the development of heritage theory and may entail the circulation of dichotomized, static, and essentialized misconceptions of Indigenous, popular, and folk culture.

The symposium will explore the following themes:

* How does historical research allow us to investigate the ways in which boundaries and interrelationships between different cultures and forms of knowledge have been constructed, maintained, and negotiated across time? In what ways can disciplinary histories in folklore and ethnology shed light on these shifting epistemic boundaries?

* Who are the complex and intertwined constellations of actors involved in the institutionalization of culture within academic, governmental, and heritage entities? How are multiple roles as scholars, policy advisors, practitioners, and/or administrators appropriately navigated, while maintaining intellectual integrity and ethical standards? What are the forms and formats of such communications across different cultures and heritage regimes?

* How do institutionalization, heritagization, negotiation, and commodification transform cultural practices? And how do practices of cultural production and consumption circulate between different times, spaces, and social groups?

* What are the ways for mediation and collaboration to be carried out and reconceived through the work of cultural brokers, who endeavour to reconcile academic and local knowledge systems, negotiate epistemological authority, and co-produce heritage in both scholarly and community contexts?

We are planning to record the presentations and roundtables once we have the presenters' approval. We are also planning to publish selected papers.

Participants in the symposium will journey on Friday to [Salagon](#) Museum and Gardens, a centre for ethnobotanical research which includes a museum on the 2000-year history of the site, a twelfth century priory and themed gardens created on ethnobotanical principles. It is in the Luberon Regional Natural Park in Haute Provence, in a spectacular area of limestone mountains and hilltop villages. A temporary exhibition on the history of ceramics in Haute-Provence will be on view during our visit. Antonin Chabert (Salagon Ethnology Research Centre) will guide us on the visit of the centre and the museum.

Everyone attending the symposium is invited to visit Marseille on Saturday for a tour of [Mucem](#), the Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, with structures on the Marseille waterfront that include the fifteenth century Fort Saint-Jean. The museum houses one of the largest ethnology and folklore collections in Europe, with the objects previously held by the Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro and the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires. Symposium participant Marie-Charlotte Calafat, Mucem's head curator, will provide an introduction to the museum. Our visit to the museum will include a visit to "*Méditerranées. Inventions et représentations*", which brings together perspectives from artists and ethnologists. Also on view during our visit are other exhibits on Mediterranean history and culture along with temporary exhibitions which include *Bonnes Mères* (Good Mothers), which explores motherhood in historical perspective as an intimate experience, social construct, political matter, and artistic theme.



SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE (in alphabetical order):

Robert Baron (Goucher College)

Hande Birkalan-Gedik (Institut f. KAEE, Goethe-Universität Frankfurt)

Antonin Chabert (Salagon Ethnology Research Centre)

Cyril Isnart (IDEAS, CNRS)

Gabriele Orlandi (Université de la Vallée d'Aoste)

Carley Williams (Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen)



Keynote

Crossing Past, Present, and Future of Folklore Music in Southern France. A Dialogue on Musical and Ethnological Knowledges

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and **Manu Théron**, Musician, Cité de la Musique, Marseille

After the Romantic gaze on European rural cultures, the decolonialization of exoticism, and the critic of “world music” label, what can be said about performances, institutions, archives, actors and investigations on local music? Both concerned by the evolution and fate of performances and repertoires of Southern France cultures, a musician and an anthropologist will elaborate on the past, present and future of local music in cultural, institutional and ordinary contexts. Is collecting traditional music still necessary? Where are the archives and what are the transmission channels? How and where to play and perform local music today? What are the academic and institutional frames of such popular practices? In which ways are local languages, as Occitan dialects, good to sing with? How could anthropology and music creation break the boundaries and speak to each other? When the far-right ideologies are near, what are the political implications of performing and studying such music? Focusing on the past and present of Southern France musical traditions, this dialog between anthropological study and practices of local music may enlighten the possible relationships between musical and academic knowledges.

Cyril Isnart is an anthropologist at the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and Director of the Mediterranean Centre for Humanities and Social Sciences (Aix-Marseille University and CNRS). His research focuses on the resurgence of marginal musical and religious traditions, such as Jewish heritage and music with rural origins, within the context of Southern Europe and the Mediterranean region, which is characterized by urbanization, globalization and the growth of the tourism industry. He has published around fifty articles in journals such as *Ethnologie Française*, *Civilisations*, *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Etnográfica* and *Ethnologia Europea* and co-edited collective works on cultural heritage in contemporary global societies, religious heritage, cultural rescuers and fantastic beings, as well as journal issues on alternative and contestatory forms of heritage, the reconstruction of vanished places, tradition and its reconfigurations, heritage disasters and de-heritagization.

Bio: It was in southern Italy and Bulgaria – countries he travelled extensively throughout for over four years – that **Manu Théron** discovered traditional singing, through his regular contact with traditional singers and choirs. Determined to re-establish Occitan singing within this Mediterranean world, he founded Gacha Empega, followed by Lo Còr de la Plana, Sirventes, Polifonic System and Madalena... A passionate musician, he channels the originality of his interpretation into a revitalised Occitan culture, which he strives to bring to life both on stage and through his teaching.

PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

(In order of the presenter's last name)

Applying, Embodying and Representing Folkloristic Scholarship in American Public Folklore

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Public folklorists in the United States, most of whom possess advanced degrees in folklore, study, embody and apply folkloristic scholarship in their practice. In emphasizing relational interactions with communities, they share and yield authority through dialogical engagement, which can bring out divergent interpretive perspectives and contrasts of local and academic knowledge. Public folklore, which emerged as the most prevalent term for public practice in the 1980s, continued applied folklore's dissemination of folklore scholarship outside of academe and its socially ameliorative concerns while generally eschewing the unidirectional application of knowledge. From its beginnings, public folklore's embodiment and application of scholarship have included recontextualization informed by the performance paradigm, which sees folklore as an emergent in social interaction. Presentations are frequently grounded in and replicate customary contexts for performance. Public folklore scholarship and practice engage critical reflexivity about intervention in ongoing cultural processes that transform and adapt traditions, which may generate revitalization, renewal and community cultural self-determination or entail misappropriation, commodification and/or negative impacts on practice. Scholarship about public folklore informing practice also relates to such core folkloristic issues as continuity and change, cultural brokerage, decolonization and transmission. This presentation will also explore how public folklore has engaged folkloristic scholarships in theory and practice, resulting in its application and dissemination. And it will consider how the mediation of public folklorists entails asymmetries and shifts in representational and epistemological authority, generates community cultural self-determination, and deals with divergent representation of folklore scholarship. This presentation will also note how discourse about these issues relates to current scholarship in critical heritage studies.

Public Folklore *alla turca*: State-Led Institutionalization and the Relocation of Folklore Knowledge (1950s–1980s)

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This presentation focuses on the transformation of folklore knowledge in Turkey between the 1950s and 1980s, a period marked by the paradoxical flourishing of folklore activities outside of formal academia. Following the 1948 closure of the only independent folklore department in Turkey due to political upheaval, the discipline underwent a significant re-labelling and re-location. I will present how folklore knowledge was operationalized by

state-funded organizations, national institutes, and civil society actors to reach a wider audience, effectively blurring the lines between “academic” and “public” practice. I argue that Turkey offers a unique historical perspective on “public folklore”. While post-war European ethnology moved toward transnational orientations, Turkish folklore remained intensely national, yet was produced through a complex network of bureaucrats, lay folklorists, and state-supported scholars. By examining specific folklore milieus ranging from state archives to (inter)national congresses, I present how these entities redefined the meanings and functions of folklore knowledge. Utilizing *Begriffsgeschichte* (history of concepts, Koselleck, Conze, Brunner) and critical discourse analysis, I aim to unpack how these “non-academic” formats challenged the canon and created new genres and styles of folklore knowledge. I challenge the geographical and epistemological margins often assigned to Turkey in European ethnological narratives. Ultimately, I aim to demonstrate how folklore knowledge was historically and politically embedded within heritage regimes, providing a compelling case for understanding how cultural brokers negotiate epistemological authority when traditional academic structures were absent.

Situating the Past in the Present: Negotiating Heritage, Institutionalization and Commodification in Dutch Folk Dance Participation and Performance

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The mid-twentieth-century Netherlands saw widespread institutionalization of folk dance as part of a post-WWII heritagization movement aimed at consolidating Dutch national identity. Aald Hielpen folklore song and dance group from Hindeloopen, Netherlands is a longstanding product of the initial heritage boom in the Netherlands. Hindeloopen, a small Frisian coastal town, has institutionalized and heritagized its language and cultural heritage as distinct from the surrounding region. *Volksdans* (Dutch folk dance) is used by Aald Hielpen as a participatory measure through which members of the group can engage with other aspects of Hindeloopen’s heritage and identity. These other aspects include traditional dress, festivals, music, games, history, dance, and language. Through performances abroad and within the Netherlands, the group shares and re-establishes their shared culture, history, and identity. After over 100 years of performing their heritage, Aald Hielpen has negotiated and re-negotiated their practices with each rising generation in order to sustain the existence of the group and safeguard their cultural practices. While this has resulted in commodification through performance, this is seen as necessary for the preservation of a small, localized culture seeking to continually distinguish itself from the rest of the Netherlands. Changes that come from continual inter-generational cultural production and consumption are negotiated within the group as they fight to maintain their group’s relevance despite waning interest in folk culture in the Netherlands. Folk dance has provided a vehicle for engagement in heritage for both members of Aald Hielpen and their audiences and as such has become the means of circulating Hindeloopen’s practices across time, spaces and groups. This presentation will relate relevant details from the author’s MA thesis based on ethnographic fieldwork with Aald Hielpen. It will address how their cultural practices have been transformed

through institutionalization, heritagization, negotiation, and commodification into a performance and practice that continually re-establishes local identity.

Folklore in Motion

Marie-Charlotte Calafat

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Mucem

This presentation explores the legacy of the Mucem's folkloric and ethnographic collections as a way to reflect on how we engage with them today and what they can offer us. It raises questions about our practices, knowledge of materials and techniques, and the richness of forms as sources of inspiration. The collection is approached as a space for thinking about margins, and as support for plural narratives: those of the individuals who created and used these objects, as well as those who collected and institutionalized them. It highlights how ethnographic materials and curatorial approaches circulate between popular traditions and contemporary creation, renewing the ways in which folklore is preserved, interpreted, and presented within a museum context.

The Historical Trajectory of Japanese 'Visiting Deities': Emergence and Re-Appropriations of an Ethnological Category

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The study of rituals involving visits of spirits and deities into the human world has been a long-standing theme of Japanese folklore studies, *minzokugaku* 民俗学. One of the pioneers of the field, Orikuchi Shinobu 折口信夫 (1887-1953), has famously coined the word *marebito* マレビト to describe spiritual visitors from another world. The widespread presence of such practices across Japan, where annual events celebrate the coming of these deities, has inspired numerous theories about the diffusion of Japanese culture throughout the archipelago. During the post-war period, the term *raihōshin* 来訪神, "visiting deities", emerged as an important category within the very rich inventory of popular customs compiled by Japanese folklorists. In the 2010s, the term "Raiho-shin" was officially adopted to refer to a group of ten annual events jointly registered as Intangible Cultural Heritage by UNESCO and described as "ritual visits of deities in masks and costumes". These rituals are performed in eight different prefectures that span nearly the entire country. While some host communities have developed a strong tourism industry around these events, most remain deeply local, with no connection between them. Nevertheless, Japan's Agency for Cultural Affairs has repeatedly invoked the *raihōshin* denomination as a way to link these diverse customs together and present them as integral to the national culture. Folklore studies have historically played an important role in the development of intangible heritage protection frameworks and initiatives in Japan. Based on field research conducted between 2024 and 2025, this presentation examines how concepts and categories rooted in folklore studies are being mobilized in heritage-making, a process that, in Japan, is largely driven by top-down initiatives.

How the Notion of Folklorism Shaped the Vision of Folk Art and Vernacular Creativity in East-Central Europe

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Based on my fieldwork in Romania, Serbia, and Hungary, I examine how the term “folklorism” was introduced, applied, and congealed in the ethnographic and folkloristic academic discourse in East-Central Europe, and how it shaped the academic focus and results. Until the 1970s, folk art was one of the main fields within ethnography, ethnology, and folkloristics. Nonetheless, scholarly meanings and approaches varied across cultural regions, languages, theoretical frames, and disciplines. Ethnographic and folkloristic studies of folk art often imagined it within national or ethnic frames, primarily associated with peasant or rural art. As rural lifeworlds have changed radically during the twentieth century, the etic meaning of folk art became increasingly anachronistic, and its appearance outside its original context was regarded and classified as folklorism (Herman Bausinger, Hans Moser, Vilmos Voigt) or the “second life of folklore” (Lauri Honko). This focus led to the marginalization of contemporary vernacular creativity in academic discourse. Consequently, revival movements, vernacular creativity, and applied folk arts received much less ethnographic scholarly attention in the Post-Socialist countries than their supposedly vanished predecessor: the often idealized and romanticized, “self-supplying” peasant art. “Ethnographic present” became a historical perspective on the vanished peasant culture. (Notable exceptions include research on the role of folk art in tourism, heritage-making, the critical examination of authenticity, and the roles of personality in communal forms of art.) Scholarly resistance to the term folk art for contemporary issues has evolved in many parts of Europe (and in some other parts of the world, but not in the USA or India, for instance). Despite these academic considerations and alterations, the term “folk art” is still widely used in everyday life in East-Central Europe. Meanwhile, academic discourse increasingly diverged from the common language, thus from people’s cognition. “Art of the folk/people,” however, never disappears.

Georges Henri Rivière and the Project for an Ethnology of the French Regions in 1946

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In this presentation, I examine the way Georges Henri Rivière planned regional ethnology in France after World War II. Interestingly, some of the proposals he formulated in 1946 are still quite relevant today. In 1946, the main issue was how to re-launch the Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires (National Museum of Folk Arts and Traditions) program after a difficult period of war and occupation by the Nazis. This period forced the ethnologists of the MNATP to make certain compromises. Now, they needed to demonstrate their usefulness in a context where the left had regained its power. It was

necessary to rediscover the inspiration that had valued the study of ethnology and folklore before the war, under the Popular Front leftist government. To this end, Georges Henri Rivière embarked on a national tour of local ethnology museums. I will focus on his work in Provence, showing how it was a structuring force in the long term, since the impetus he provided in 1946 continues to influence the current organization of ethnology museums in the region. With this historical example, my aim is to contribute to the study of the transformations and applications of folkloric and ethnological knowledge. I will explain who the key figures in regional ethnology were in 1946 and analyse the transformations that have occurred since then. I would also like to examine the ambiguous political uses of folklore, over the long term, between conservatism and progressivism.

Theoretical Underpinnings within Public Folklore's Intellectual History

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In an influential article published thirty years ago, Alan Dundes challenged folklorists to consider their discipline's intellectual history. He asserted that theories in folklore are largely derived from pre-existing approaches, and he lamented the lack of unifying theoretical orientations that demonstrate unique contributions from folklore scholarship. At the same time, others challenged public folklorists to articulate their theoretical contributions to folklore. These critiques affirmed the need to show how novel contributions to folklore can not only enhance the discipline but also contribute to a more generalized scholarly discourse. This scholarship evoked an interest in how approaches to public folklore are connected to the discipline's history. This intellectual inquiry has explored contributions to folklore scholarship that have largely been made outside of academic institutions. These perspectives may not provide a grand theory of folklore as called for by Dundes, but they do suggest a theoretical legacy that public folklorists have developed for well over a century. This conference presentation shows how public folklore has contributed to a wider intellectual discourse by elucidating theoretical underpinnings of public folklore work. The presentation begins with an emphasis on nineteenth century foundations that serve as a basis for folklife studies. It then moves into early twentieth century articulations of cultural pluralism within folklore as well as folklorists' engagement with social history. The presentation then shifts to the coalescence of public folklore in the 1970s, and it concludes by showing how the work of public folklore can address Dundes' challenge for articulating unique theoretical contributions from the discipline. Many of the perspectives are derived from the presenter's teaching and research within a doctoral program in heritage studies, and the presentation explores intellectual history and theoretical underpinnings relevant to applied folklore and related disciplines.

Asymptotically Flirting with Redundancy is Your Mission: Cultural Brokerage and Institutional Facilitation in heritage and folklore: the VCV (1999-2007) as a Case Study

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One of the famous scenes and prudential quotes in the Mission Impossible Movies Series is: “this message will self-destruct in five seconds”. In institutions or jobs for facilitation, capacity-building, mediation and cultural brokerage the implicit, almost masochistic mission message seems to be “do your job so well that you make yourself (your job, your institution) redundant”. But on the other hand, cultural heritage brokerage has proven to be a critical success factor. Transformation is more productive than self-destruction; hence a case-study. Between 1998 and 2008 a decree on “folk/popular culture” (“volkscultuur”) and the establishment of a Flemish Centre for “Volkscultuur” existed in the Flemish Community in Belgium. Almost immediately after the start-up, the new centre was not only confronted with the fall-out of a political incident involving the negative framing of folk culture, but more substantially and positively with two major policy framing Waves: the top-down introduction of a non-monumental nor archaeological interpretation of the notion of “heritage” and the emerging UNESCO paradigm of safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the 2000s. In such cases, Judo helps. The strategy of using the notion of “popular culture” between inverted commas was traded in for surfing and attempting to channel the two Waves. What was gained and what was lost in the rapid transformation from “popular culture” to heritage work/policy/theory and safeguarding intangible heritage in particular? What are the takeaways from this experience? Is this transition period now quickly fading away from active memory and argumentation in the age of (implementing) Faro Flemish Interface for Cultural Heritage and the Blue Book, the Basic Texts with the Operational Directives of the 2003 Convention? And rhetorically questioning: is it appropriate and productive to write this story as a former protagonist in a reflexive recollection?

The Scientization of the Land: The Basque Landscape under the Eye of Anthropologists

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This presentation is a reflection on the Basque research of Eugeniusz Frankowski (1884-1962), carried out in collaboration with a group of researchers from la Sociedad de Eusko-Folklore. The author focuses on scientific practices from the early twentieth century, which can be identified as contributing to the process of “scientization of the land”. The boundaries between the field, the cabinet, and the laboratory are a topic that has been thoroughly analyzed by the humanities, particularly by STS and postcolonial studies. However, the example of Basque expeditions (the author refers in particular to the work of José Miguel de Barandiarán, Telesforo de Aranzadi Unamuno, Enrique Eguren Bengoa and their collaboration with Eugeniusz Frankowski) will enable us to see the intertwining

of emerging research traditions (archaeology, biological anthropology, biology, ethnology, history etc.). Also, it shows how transnational and transcultural encounters among scientists representing different disciplines fostered knowledge production in the Basque Country, and how these contributions advanced transcultural understandings in ethnology and folklore. However, Zulaika directs the author's attention in yet another direction, as he points out that in the Basque "archaeological microcosmos" the most relevant aspect was to create "the bridge between then and now"—it could not happen without "mythical imagination and scientific invention" (Zulaika, *Del Cromañon al Carnaval*). The imagination, the belief, had in fact enormous influence upon the process of conducting the research. The research practices carried out in the Basque Country were highly motivated by the belief that came from the myth of the beginning. The strong belief about the different origins of the Basques led in fact to a series of archaeological expeditions that searched the land (and created the field) for irrefutable evidence of the otherness of *Euskaldunak*.

From Working-class Heritage to (de)institutionalised Welfare Mutual Aid Legacy: Reframing Labor Memory as Public Practice in the Urban Margins of Aosta, Italy

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In recent decades, heritage studies and anthropology have critically examined how institutional frameworks shape the processes through which cultural practices are recognized, preserved, and transformed into heritage (Smith 2006; Harrison 2013). Critical studies have also highlighted how processes of heritagization, if imagined from above, within urban regeneration or territorial marketing projects, risk producing selective and poorly inclusive narratives with respect to the diversity of cultural bearers (Bonato, 2009). This research, based on an ongoing ethnography in the Alpine city of Aosta (Italy), examines neighbourhoods of working-class origin, now predominantly occupied by social housing and experiencing significant demographic and social changes due to regeneration processes. It investigates how residents and policy makers are mobilizing or reformulating the memory of industrial labour—once a pivotal aspect of local identity, but now not recognized as an effective heritage community—and the current, contentious perception of the neighbourhood, often marked by asymmetrical power dynamics (Elias & Scotson, 1994). It examines the potential heritage of informal and intangible care practices that persist among residents as forms of collective resilience, interpreting vulnerability and interdependence as opportunities to develop innovative alternatives for care processes (Collective Care, 2020). Policy makers seem to increasingly acknowledge these relational infrastructures, promoting new institutional protocols that integrate social services, public housing agencies, and community actors to strengthen neighbourhood support systems. A question arises: might these dynamics be understood as an implicit legacy of working-class memory? The research, conducted as part of a doctoral applied project in a collaboration between the University of Milan-Bicocca and the Municipality of Aosta, combines participant observation, semi-structured interviews with residents, local associations, and institutional actors, and the analysis of

policy documents and urban regeneration programs. From this perspective, ethnographic knowledge can play a key role in mediating between everyday practices and institutional frameworks, helping to foster more plural and socially embedded heritage policies.

Botany and Power: Science, Development, and Public Use of Folk Ecological Knowledge in the 19th-century Western Alps

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The use of indigenous ecological know-how for purposes of economic enhancement represents an under-explored, yet significant, area of the application of folk knowledge within public action. During Napoleonic domination, 19th-century scientists in the Italian Western Alps were mandated to formalize and spread 'appropriate' ecological culture, thus participating in governmentalizing efforts to reform mountain grazing practices and increase dairy production. In light of this, the cultural institutionalization practiced at the time should be regarded as a field where different forms of knowledge were mediated through practices of knowledge circulation and overlapping epistemic jurisdictions. In particular, my presentation will explore the trans-local life (1753-1827) of a doctor and politician from the Italian southwestern Alps. In the spirit of the Enlightenment, this Alpine dignitary composed several botanical handbooks for educational purposes eventually formalizing vernacular expertise about mountain pastures and bridging it with scientific reasoning and scholarly references. Drawing on archival research, the talk will combine theory in science and technology studies with a historical perspective to explore how folk forms of ecological knowledge were subsumed within apparatuses of cultural institutionalization and government. Focusing on the individual trajectory of this cultural broker, the presentation will consider the political and epistemological entanglements that allowed the application of indigenous ecological know-how to circulate across different territories and knowledge systems. More broadly, in considering how vernacular ecological understandings and scientific reasoning could coalesce in generative ways, the talk will explore public institutional practice of folklore use as a complex, dynamic, and negotiated space where different knowledge systems were recomposed.

Transforming Factory Folklore into Cultural Heritage: Historical and Modern Genres of *BeykozKundura*

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This presentation explores how the cultural heritage of *BeykozKundura*, a state-owned shoe factory (1933-2000), is constructed, perceived, and criticized. Situated by the Bosphorus in Istanbul, *BeykozKundura* hosted a community of 3000 workers and employees, becoming a *lieu de mémoire* for the Beykoz community. Designed as a large-scale social and cultural ecosystem, the factory went beyond production activities,

including cultural, recreational and welfare practices. Workers and employees worked in different spaces, but came together on several social and cultural occasions, inventing their own everyday traditions. The folklore of *BeykozKundura* included the celebration of weddings, birthdays, retirement ceremonies, along with cinema screenings, New Year, national, and religious holidays. The yearly collective circumcision held in the Beykoz meadow as a festival became a strong social ritual, bonding the factory and the local community. After its privatization, new owners restored old buildings and assigned them new functions. Today, as a multi-faceted cultural venue, *BeykozKundura* faces many challenges. Established during a complex period in Turkey, when neoliberal policies offered both hope and antagonism, the old factory compound evokes diverse emotions. While nostalgia for old times dominates public discourse, in the shaky economic context, BeykozKundura is primarily approached today as a source of employment for Beykoz residents and public contributions. Meanwhile, former factory traditions are revived for Istanbul's general audience through celebrations of the new year and other special days, screenings, free artistic and academic workshops, and opportunities for contemporary artists to engage in new productions. This paper critically examines how *BeykozKundura's* past folklore was transformed into cultural heritage, which may be approached and perceived differently in contemporary Beykoz.

Transformations and Applications of Ethnological Knowledge: The Life Cycle Holidays in Soviet Lithuania

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This presentation examines the transformation and application process of life cycle holidays in Soviet Lithuania. The report raises the question—what was the strategy for creating the life cycle holidays in Lithuania during the Soviet era? The Soviet regime sought to change people's thinking, lifestyle, and give new meaning to recently created civil holidays. As soon as the Soviet government took power in Lithuania, it banned the celebration of national and religious holidays and sought to accustom people to new civil holidays. Instead of Christian holidays, they began not only to strengthen the traditions of Soviet holidays, but also to adapt some old holidays to new conditions, erasing their Christian elements and incorporating certain folk traditions. In the Soviet era, the following strategies were applied for the formation of holidays: Instead of church holidays and rituals, revive the old traditions of folk holidays and rituals; Create new traditions that had no analogues before; Adapt old traditions, developing new ones from them, but not reviving old customs, but using some old forms, giving them socialist content (Pečiūra 1974: 77-79). Since 1963, civil ceremonies have been introduced to the most important events in a person's life. During the Soviet era, it was hoped to create alternatives to the sacraments of baptism, confirmation, marriage, and funerals. Baptism was replaced by name days, confirmation – youth days, and church marriage – registration at the civil registry office (Streikus 2003: 516). In summary, the study reveals the unsuccessful efforts of the Soviet government to create new civil life cycle rituals. Ideologized civil

rituals of an entertaining nature did not take root in Soviet-era Lithuania, and have not been maintained as tradition to this day.

Institutionalizing Ethnic Culture in Lithuania: The Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture between Policy and Living Tradition

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This presentation examines the institutionalization of ethnic culture in Lithuania through the case of the Council for the Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture (est. 2000), an expert body advising the Parliament and the Government on issues of ethnic culture policy and intangible cultural heritage. Established under the Framework Law on State Safeguarding of Ethnic Culture, the Council represents a distinctive model in which folklore scholarship, state governance, and community-based cultural practice intersect. The paper draws on debates on institutionalization, heritagization, and epistemic authority to explore how boundaries between academic knowledge, political decision-making, and vernacular tradition are constructed and negotiated. It asks: how does an expert council translate disciplinary histories of folklore and ethnology into strategic cultural policy? Who are the actors involved, and how are their multiple roles—as scholars, advisors, activists, and administrators—navigated within a governmental framework? Empirically, the analysis focuses on three interrelated dimensions of the Council’s activity: 1) the preservation and symbolic stabilization of Lithuania’s ethnographic regions, 2) the institutional support and standardization of calendar festivals as forms of living heritage; and 3) the integration of ethnic culture into education, cultural tourism, and regional cultural governance through its five regional divisions. By analyzing policy documents, public statements, and selected initiatives, the paper demonstrates how institutional frameworks simultaneously safeguard, formalize, and transform cultural practices. The Lithuanian case contributes to broader discussions on how academic expertise, state institutions, and local communities co-produce heritage, negotiate cultural authority, and shape the contemporary governance of tradition.

Recovering Romani Heritage: Decolonizing European Museums, Archives, and Tourism via Epistemic Activism

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My presentation investigates both the exclusion and the exotification of Roma in European history and public spaces and explores the strategies and challenges of identifying and recovering Romani voices and material culture. Roma are Europe’s largest minority (12 million) but have little visibility in heritage policy and state cultural institutions, including archives and museums. Roma have faced prejudice, discrimination, and marginalization since their arrival in Europe over a thousand years ago and are

current targets of neo-nationalism. I critically examine two sites of heritage embedded in state policy: invisibility in ethnographic museums; and controversies surrounding North Macedonian Representative heritage lists. Historically non-Roma have not only produced most of the scholarship about Roma but also positioned themselves as the experts “on” Roma. Furthermore, traditional Romani tangible and intangible heritage have been subsumed into the monolithic category “peasant life,” thus obscuring Romani agency. Like post-colonial subjects, Roma question the production of accepted epistemic knowledge, pointing out that powerful people create truth paradigms while marginal people are not heard. In SIEF, Roma were included in the 2023 workshop “Dark Histories of European Ethnologies and Folklore Studies;” note also that Roma were excluded from the 2023 “multi-cultural Brno” tour even though Brno hosts the only state-funded museum of Roma culture. In the last few decades, Romani activists and scholars have demanded discursive space. I thus explore the challenges involved when Roma occupy new public spaces of heritage. If time allows, I will focus on three Romani-led initiatives that faced (and face) definitional, structural, and financial challenges: the digital online RomArchive.eu; the European Romani Institute of Arts and Culture Tangible Heritage Network 2019 Project; and the proposed Council of Europe Roma Cultural Route which negotiates the lure of ghetto and/or exotic tourism with lived Romani realities.

From the Local to the National: Tracing the Democratization of Heritagization Processes

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The current rise of anti-democratic movements, and their strategists’ pursuit of controlling heritage institutions and the information they disseminate, especially at the national level, casts in high relief the advancements that have been made over half a century in democratizing the heritagization processes that lie at their core. In considering institutional resilience against such threats, and the extent to which democratic values— as a counterforce— are thereby entrenched, a confluence of historical influences comes into play, underpinning decades-long efforts to not only promote cultural diversity in the broadest sense, but to increase racialized and minoritized people’s representation and inclusion in – and control over – heritage processes and products, such as via national-level museums and other public memory institutions. Indeed, historical research on the decolonization, and thus democratization, of heritage institutions and practice over the past several decades brings to light an array of overlapping influences that include: widespread social justice movements; various disciplinary “reflexive turns”; and the development of related legal and policy frameworks, nationally and internationally, among others. Moreover, as the presentation explores, equally important is tracing the impacts of community-led ethnographic practices and heritage safeguarding approaches, and the proliferation of community-established cultural organizations, museums, and archives since the 1960s, on the more mainstream heritage enterprise and its ongoing democratization. In particular, the presentation examines instances of where local-level, community-led heritage efforts directly shaped policy and associated efforts at national

heritage institutions in the context of the U.S. in the late 20th century. As discussed, the legacies of this significant line of influence persist today, and continue to ethically and equitably guide support of community-led heritage safeguarding work across the country—and in further democratizing the public, historical, and cultural record at the national level.

“You keep using that word...”: Public Folklore and UNESCO’s Intangible Cultural Heritage Convention

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This presentation reflects on a persistent conundrum that has accompanied my engagement with UNESCO’s 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) over more than two decades. Introduced to the Convention during its drafting stages as an undergraduate in Folklore Studies in Canada, alongside formative training in Public Folklore at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, I have long viewed these domains as interconnected: academic research, applied practice, and evolving international policy symbiotically supporting living heritage. However, upon returning to the Convention years later in the UK, I experienced a recurring sense of disjuncture. Conversations with colleagues and practitioners around definitions of “intangible cultural heritage” and safeguarding methodologies were productive, yet I was left with a persistent sense that we were working alongside, rather than fully within, the same conceptual space. It seemed to me that the emerging field of ICH arrived—indirectly and over time—at approaches and developments already addressed within Public Folklore. As an emerging researcher, this raised ongoing questions. If Public Folklore has well-established community-led models of self-representation, why did the field seem largely absent from many ICH discussions? Did *I* have a fundamental misunderstanding of the Convention’s core concepts, or were key methodological processes and interpretive frameworks missing from the wider conversations? As focus at UNESCO has turned toward Article 18, participatory approaches, the ‘Other List’ of good safeguarding practices, and the growing role of civil society through NGOs, are the Public Folklore frameworks from the drafting table quietly (re-)emerging? And as ICH has become a global heritage field, have those frameworks begun to influence how Public Folklore is conceptualized and theorized? Framed through personal reflection, this presentation revisits a foundational puzzle of connections and shifting vocabularies, and the ongoing circulation of knowledge in global heritage policy.



PRESENTER BIOS

(in Alphabetical order in the last name of the presenters)

Robert Baron is Assistant Professor of Practice in the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability Program at Goucher College, former President of the ICH NGO Forum, President of the Fellows of the American Folklore Society, and he served as director of the Folk Arts, Music and Museum programs of the New York State Council on the Arts. Baron has done field research in the Caribbean, US and East Asia. His publications include *Creolization as Cultural Creativity*, edited with Ana Cara; *Public Folklore*, edited with Nick Spitzer, and articles in the *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, *Curator*, *Journal of American Folklore* and *Journal of Folklore Research*. He has been a Non-Resident Fellow of the W.E.B. Du Bois Institute for African-American Research, a Fulbright Specialist in Finland, Greece, the Philippines and Slovenia, and held a Smithsonian Fellowship in Museum Practice. He holds a PhD in Folklore and Folklife from the University of Pennsylvania.

Hande Birkalan-Gedik is Professor of Folklore, Cultural Anthropology and Gender Studies. After studying at Boğaziçi University in her native Istanbul, she received her Ph.D. in Folklore from Indiana University, where she studied cultural anthropology and gender studies. She is currently a Research Fellow at the Institute of Cultural Anthropology and European Ethnology at Goethe-University Frankfurt. She serves on the SIEF board; she is the co-convenor of the Historical Approaches in Cultural Analysis (HACA). Recently she was appointed as SIEF historian. She is the founding editor and currently the co-editor of *SIEF Series in Ethnology and Folklore: New Directions in the Study of Everyday Life, Past and Present* (Berghahn). She is the (co)-editor of three books; and author of several articles, special issues and book reviews published in journals such as *Cultural Analysis*, *JFR*, *JAF*, *folklor/edebiyat*. Her most recent co-edited book is [Fabrics of Anthropological Knowledge: Changing Perspectives in Europe and Beyond | Berghahn Books](#) (2025).

Rachel Burnham is a recent graduate from the Choreomundus International Masters in Dance Knowledge, Practice and Heritage delivered through the consortium of Université Clermont Auvergne, University of Szeged, NTNU, and Roehampton University. Her research focused on folk dance in the Netherlands as a participatory social action through which dancers can engage in talent as relational transactions and while engaging in their cultural identity. As a lifelong dancer and now dance anthropologist her interest lies in sensory apprenticeship as an ethnographic methodology that recognizes cognition as embodied and uses all the body's senses and knowledge. She is also a recently accepted Ethnochoreology PhD candidate at the University of Limerick.

Marie-Charlotte Calafat is Scientific Director and Head of Collections at [Mucem](#). She is responsible for the "Museum History" unit and acts as the reference curator for the major department dedicated to Ethnological Heritage and the Societies of Europe and the

Mediterranean. She curates exhibitions at Mucem on museology and popular arts, including *Roman-Photo* (2017), *Georges Henri Rivière. Seeing is Understanding* (2018), *Folklore* (2020), *Fashion Folklore: Popular Costumes and Haute Couture, At the Household Arts Fair, René Perrot* (2023), *Shared Passions. The Lambert Collection at Mucem* (2024), and the new permanent galleries *Mediterranean(s): Inventions and Representations*.

Louis Canales is a PhD student in Japanese studies, affiliated with CNRS and the IrAsia Research Centre, at the University of Aix-Marseille. During an exchange year in the Japanese Tōhoku, he first came into contact with local rites and festivals, sometimes through participant observation. The prevalence of alarming discourse surrounding food self-sufficiency rates, rural decline and depopulation has made a lasting impact on him. From 2023 onward he is writing a PhD thesis about heritage making initiatives in relation to visiting deities' rituals. From 2024 to 2026 he spent a year and a half as a research collaborator at the Research Centre for Nonwritten Cultural Materials of the Kanagawa University, in Yokohama.

László Koppány Csáji has his Bachelor's, Master's, and PhD degrees in European Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology (University of Pécs) and Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctor's degree in Law (ELTE University). He has been a member of SIEF since 2015, in the Ethnology of Religions Working Group (EoR WG). Board member of Young Scholars Working Group since 2019, serving as its co-chair between 2021 and 2023. Co-chair and secretary of the recently established Folk Art and Vernacular Creativity Working Group (FACV WG). He was the working group leader on Quality Assurance at a EU-project: establishment of FilmEU University in Brussels until the end of 2021. He is the head of the Research Institute of Art Theory and Methodology at the Hungarian Academy of Arts since 2022. His research fields include ethnology of religions, anthropology of art, historical anthropology, and ethnicity studies, combining interpretive anthropological methods with cognitive semantics and discourse analysis. He has done fieldwork in Romania, Serbia, Hungary, India, Pakistan, Russia, Indonesia, Japan, North Macedonia, Finland, and Norway.

Laurent Sébastien Fournier is a full Professor of Anthropology at the University of Côte d'Azur (Nice), where he conducts his research within the Laboratory of Anthropology and Clinical, Cognitive, and Social Psychology (LAPCOS, UPR 7278). As an expert in intangible cultural heritage, he has worked on contemporary revitalizations of festive traditions and their preservation as heritage in France, Great Britain and Italy. His research perspective is that of historical anthropology and of comparative ethnology at a European scale. He is president of the French Ethnological Society and has served as a member of the SIEF executive committee.

Gregory Hansen is Professor of Folklore and English at Arkansas State University, where he also teaches in the Heritage Studies Ph.D. Program. Dr. Hansen specializes in the folklife of America's southern states and on various presentations of traditional expressive

culture within a range of media. Among his publications is the book *A Florida Fiddler: The Life and Times of Richard Seaman*. In addition to his research on fiddle tunes, bluegrass, and a variety of performance traditions, Hansen also has written widely on public folklore and on public presentations of heritage. He recently co-edited a new volume titled *Sustaining Support for Intangible Cultural Heritage*. He continues to complete a wider range of public folklore programs, including music festivals, educational programs, workshops, symposia, and community-based documentation projects.

Marc Jacobs is full Professor in Heritage Studies in ARCHES/Faculty of Design Sciences of the University of Antwerp (since 2019) and part time Professor in Heritage Studies at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (since 2011). From 1999 till 2007 he was director of the Flemish Centre for Popular Culture (VCV) and from 2008 till 2019 director of FARO Flemish Interface for Cultural Heritage in Brussels (Belgium).

Anna Leśniewska is a PhD student at the University of Silesia in Katowice. Her scientific activities are focused on Polish folklore/ethnology/ethnography in the context of the cultural sciences of the 19th and 20th centuries. She collaborates with the University of the Basque Country in Donostia-San Sebastián and Complutense University in Madrid. She participated in SIEF Congresses (2023 and 2025). Currently, she investigates the relation of Polish and Spanish researchers, especially the Sociedad de Eusko-Folklore (Jose Migel Barandiaran, Telesforo de Aranzadi and Enrique Eguren). Their cooperation leads her to reflect on the effects of the twentieth-century international collaborations in exchanging the methodologies and circulation of the local knowledge and folk culture.

Giulia Mascadri is a cultural and applied anthropologist and a PhD student in Intangible Cultural Heritage in Socio-Cultural Innovation at the Department of Human Sciences for Education “Riccardo Massa” at the University of Milan - Bicocca (Italy). Her thesis project is entitled “Workers' memories, urban regeneration and heritage communities in the suburbs of Aosta”, a mountain city in the Italian Alps. Between the Alps and the cities, she studies Alpine repopulation dynamics, community aggregation and urban regeneration through action research and participatory research projects. Drawing on her studies and professional experience in fundraising and social planning, she works in synergy with local authorities, schools, and local governments, supporting and guiding activation processes around shared aspirations. She is a member of the AAA (American Anthropological Association), EASA (European Association of Social Anthropologists), GREEN (Groupe de Recherche en Education à l'Environnement et à la Nature), SIAA (Italian Society of Applied Anthropology), and SIEF (International Society for Ethnology and Folklore).

Gabriele Orlandi has been trained in both Anthropology and Critical Development Studies. He holds a PhD degree in Social Anthropology and Ethnology at Aix-Marseille University, and he is currently a postdoctoral research fellow at University of Aosta Valley / Université de la Vallée d'Aoste. For some years now, he has been studying development

policies in the Alpine area, focusing on participatory research, environmental conflicts as well as anthropological understandings of expert knowledge and epistemic authority in rural areas.

Trained in folklore studies (MA, IU; PhD UPENN) **Arzu Öztürkmen** is Professor of Folklore, Oral History and Performance Studies at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul. She published several historical and contemporary ethnographies on Turkey. She is the author of *Türkiye’de Folklor ve Milliyetçilik* (Folklore and Nationalism in Turkey, 1998), *The Delight of Turkish Dizi: Memory, Genre and Politics of Television in Turkey* (2022), and the co-editor of *Medieval and Early Modern Performance in the Eastern Mediterranean* (2014) and *Celebration, Entertainment and Theatre in the Ottoman World* (2014). She formerly served in the boards of IOHA, SIEF and ICTM, and took part in the editorial boards of the *IJMES*, *Journal of Women’s History*, *JAF* and *Ethnologia Europaea*. She also served in the boards of oral history and folklore associations like ICTMD, IOHA and SIEF. Öztürkmen was elected as a Fellow of the American Folklore Society in 2024.

Buse Yıldırım is a documentary artist, curator, and cultural manager whose work centres on memory as a public and institutional practice. Working at the intersection of visual anthropology and heritage studies, she explores how archival knowledge, oral histories, and lived experience are translated into cultural programming and collective narratives. She is the founding artistic director of *BeykozKundura* in Istanbul, where she has led the transformation of a former industrial site into a platform for cinema, performance, and research-based engagement with memory. Since 2015, she is directing *Kundura Hafıza: Archive and Research Centre*, a non-profit initiative dedicated to preserving and critically reactivating industrial and urban memory.

Rasa Račiūnaitė-Paužuolienė is Professor of Ethnology at Vytautas Magnus University, in the Department of Cultural Studies. Her research interests focus on the life cycle, the family, youth and gender studies, urban anthropology, religious and visual anthropology, identity and migration studies, psychological and spiritual resilience. Rasa conducts field research in Lithuania, Latvia, Poland, Bulgaria, and England.

Dalia Senvaitytė, PhD, is Associate Professor in the Cultural Studies Department at Vytautas Magnus University (Kaunas, Lithuania). She is a member of the SIEF Ritual Year working group (since 2008). Her scientific research includes Lithuanian ethnic culture, ritual year studies, ancient Baltic religion, and its recent transformations.

Carol Silverman is an anthropologist and folklorist who has been involved with Balkan Romani music and culture for over 40 years. An award-winning Professor Emerita at the University of Oregon, she writes about cultural policy, heritage, gender, and human rights issues among Roma. She lectures internationally and has published numerous articles and two books: *Romani Routes: Cultural Politics and Balkan Music in Diaspora* (Oxford 2012) won the Allan Merriam Book Prize from the Society for Ethnomusicology; and

Balkanology (Bloomsbury 2021) analyzes the politics of Bulgarian wedding music. She works with the NGO Voice of Roma (festivals, tours, exhibits) and the European Roma institute for Arts and Culture, is a music curator for RomArchive.eu, does human rights legal consulting, and is a professional Balkan singer and teacher.

Michelle Stefano, Ph.D., is a public folklorist and the author of *Practical Considerations for Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Routledge 2022). She is co-editor of *The Routledge Companion to Intangible Cultural Heritage* (2017), *Engaging Heritage, Engaging Communities* (Boydell and Brewer, 2017), and *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage* (Boydell and Brewer, 2012).

Carley Williams is a public folklorist and applied ethnologist with a focus on Canadian and Scottish traditions, cultural policy, and intangible cultural heritage. She is a graduate researcher in Ethnology and Folklore at the Elphinstone Institute, University of Aberdeen, examining the implementation of UNESCO’s Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Her work bridges academic research and public practice. She co-chairs the SIEF Cultural Heritage and Property Working Group, serves as a SIEF representative to the ICH NGO Forum, and participates in its Research Working Group. She has held leadership and governance roles in grassroots traditional music and dance initiatives, festivals, and community education programmes, with extensive experience in cultural programming and community-based heritage work.

