

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/se-2021-0035> © Ústav etnológie a sociálnej antropológie SAV  
© 2021, Katarína Babčáková, Magdaléna Paríková, Soňa G. Lutherová. These are an open  
access articles licensed under the Creative Commons



MARC JACOBS, JORIYN NEYRINCK,  
EVDOKIA TSAKIRIDIS (Eds.):  
**Transforming Not Saving. Intangible  
Cultural Heritage Museums and/or  
the World**

*A Special Issue of Volkskunde. Tijdschrift  
over de cultuur van het dagelijks leven.  
[Magazine on the culture of everyday life],  
518 p.*

The Flemish-Dutch academic journal *Volkskunde* was founded in 1888 by August Gittée and Pol De Mont. It presents various pieces of research and reflects diverse themes in the field of folklore, ethnology, cultural and historical anthropology and cultural heritage, culture and museum policy and contributes to the international discourse on immaterial heritage. Among three issues per year, there is one thematic.

The special issue subtitled **Transforming Not Saving. Intangible Cultural Heritage<sup>1</sup> Museums<sup>2</sup> and/or the World** was published in 2020 with the support of the Flemish government, the University Foundation of Belgium, the Vera Himler Fund and Museums and Heritage Antwerp vzw. It was launched on the occasion of the fifth biennial conference of the Association of Critical Heritage Studies and edited by guest editors Marc Jacobs, Jorijn Neyrinck and Evdokia Tsakiridis. Historian Marc Jacobs is a professor of heritage studies in the Faculty of Design Sciences of the University of Antwerp and holder of the

UNESCO Chair on Critical Heritage Studies and the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. Jorijn Neyrinck is a comparative anthropologist. She has coordinated the NGO Workshop intangible heritage Flanders since 2003 and is the vice president of the Flemish Commission for UNESCO in Belgium and a member in the 2003 Convention's Evaluation Body, acting in addition as an independent expert between ICH communities, policy makers, institutions and civil society. Evdokia Tsakiridis is a historian graduated in cultural heritage studies. She works in the Workshop of intangible heritage Flanders, she coordinated a international Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project and she represents her organization in UNESCO's Evaluation Body and is a board member for ICOM Belgium Flanders.

Earlier in 2020, a syncretic work *Museums and intangible cultural heritage. Towards a third space in the heritage sector* (Nikolić Đerić, Neyrinck, Seghers, Tsakiridis, 2020) was published by the actors from the IMP project. In addition, diverse Workshop of intangible heritage's contributions were published in the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage Studies*. However, many other inspirational insights and themes also arose from the IMP Framework. The *Volkskunde* special issue has become a platform for these original works of researchers and actors of the IMP project.

Quoting the authors, "this issue of *Volks-*

1 UNESCO Convention (2003) definition of the intangible cultural heritage and safeguarding accessible at: <https://ich.unesco.org/en/convention>.

2 The ICOM Statutes (2007) current definition of the museum accessible at: <https://icom.museum/en/resources/standards-guidelines/museum-definition/>.

kunde, together with the article in the 2020 series of the *International Journal of Intangible Heritage Studies* and the publication *Towards a Third Space in the Heritage Sector*, aims to put the theme of museums and safeguarding intangible heritage on the agenda of museology, anthropology, folklore studies, critical heritage studies and other transdisciplines” (p. 243). In their introduction chapter *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums. A Crossing of Several Projects and Trajectories* both in English (pp. 241–248) and Dutch language mutations (pp. 249–253), three editors contextualise this issue as a scholarly result of cooperation between actors in the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Museums Project (IMP) and the UNESCO Chair on critical heritage studies and the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage (ICH) of the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. IMP, the initiative of museum and ICH institutions from Belgium, Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland and France were fostering international networking possibilities for the exchange of good practices and have explored different approaches, cooperation and practices on safeguarding ICH from 2017 to 2020.<sup>3</sup> It was financially supported by the Creative Europe programme and the Flemish government and supported also by two major museum networks, ICOM (International Council of Museums) and NEMO (Network of European Museum Organisations).

Reflecting the need of current society (concerned over diminishing cultural diversity, homogenization, and the efforts of preservation of tangible patrimony), UNESCO took on the leading position in devising new legislative tools – conventions, contracts, programmes and methodology papers for the safeguarding of cultural heritage in last two decades (Shelton, 2014). The research/documentation, safeguarding/protection, accessi-

bility and presentation of the ICH as well as exploiting of its social and economic potential is a recently extended topic of discussions and works in many contexts of cultural anthropology, ethnology, museology, historiography as well as in social, political and economic studies.

ICH in the museum world is one of the main topics of museology discourse in the last two decades. In 2004, *Museology and intangible heritage* was the name and topic of the international symposium organized by ICOFOM in Seoul, Korea 2004 and a complete edition of the papers were edited by Vieregg, Sgoff, Schiller (2004). Next, various articles, monothematic issues of periodicals and works were published by authors from different countries (main ICOM publications about ICH being *ICOM news* 2003 (4), 2004 (4) as well as *International Journal of Intangible Heritage* 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2016, 2018, 2020; ICH as the main theme also in *Museum International* 2004 (1–2), *Journal of Museum Ethnography* 2007, *Revue Musées* 2010 and others). The topics of various articles concern new challenges of research and preservation of the ICH, but also need innovative ways of presentation in the future, reflecting significant changes in the perception of the past by today’s society, using new media, technical tools and possible forms of dissemination of information, and including the broader contexts cited also in the Convention.

The main activities of a professional museum institution are selection, thesaurus (research, professional processing, and physical protection), communication (presentation, multilevel access to information) and institutionalization (Waidacher, 1999; Mruškovič, Darulová, Kollár, 2005). Ways and approaches of fulfilling the basic functions of museum activities as well as concepts of making cultural heritage accessible are undergoing a significant transformation,<sup>4</sup> reflecting the changes

3 IMP assembled museum and intangible heritage networks from different countries and activated researchers linked to universities and other heritage experts. Five international conferences and expert meetings in the partner countries and a concluding symposium welcoming more than 120 participants from Europe were organised. A special website ([www.ichandmuseums.eu/en](http://www.ichandmuseums.eu/en)), a toolkit and a series of published texts were results of those efforts.

4 The *new museology* concept, created in seventies, was based on the idea of the need to change the role of museums considered to be „isolated from the modern world, elitist, obsolete...” (Hudson, 1977: 15).

and needs of today's society.<sup>5</sup> One of the main topics in current discourse in ICH identification, preservation and presentation in the museum world (in its various forms including ecomuseums, local community museums etc.) is the community involvement and cooperation projects as well as reconfiguring the framework of "classical" museology paradigm (Stefano, Davis, Corsane, 2012) and analysing the influence of ICH safeguarding legislative documents and declaration on museum practice (Shelton, 2014 and others).<sup>6</sup> "Real change has occurred in both the understanding of museum functions and the activities that museums undertake" (McCall, Gray, 2014: 4). However, demands that the management of heritage should be "more open, inclusive, representative and creative" (Harrison, 2013: 225) remains actual.

This extensive special issue of *Volkskunde* contains three introduction articles and sixteen contributions by twenty authors from different countries, bringing new original and inspirational examples, case studies and good practice examples of ICH safeguarding projects connected to NGO and heritage community initiatives and posing new challenges to existing legislative documents, scholarly papers and museum documents and paradigm in actual society contexts and needs. The individual articles also present existing inspiring new theoretical concepts, embedded in the framework of original case studies or analysis of research data (in the case of legislative documents and their implementation as the main topic of the article). The publication does not aim to define new theoretical concepts, but rather to present a comprehensive collection of good practice examples and basic methodology and legislative documents and Convention implementation experiences. Several articles were previously presented during the final international IMP symposium or other previous meetings. The three editors in their article *Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage*



and Museums. A Special Issue (pp. 255–265) situate the contributions and case studies within the overall setup of the publication and present the main objective of the volume: relation, possibilities and intersections between the living heritage field and the museum sector and museology.

M. Jacobs in his article *Words Matter... The Arsenal and the Repertoire: UNESCO, ICOM and European Frameworks* (pp. 267–286) presents different theoretical museology concepts like S. Star's "boundary objects" or inspirational concept of D. Taylor's dichotomy of "the Archive" and "the Repertoire": "Archival memory exists as documents, maps, literary texts, letters, archaeological remains, bones, videos, films, CDs, all those items supposedly resistant to change. Archive, from the Greek, etymologically refers to 'a public building', 'a place where records are kept' (...) "The repertoire, on the other hand, enacts embodied memory: performances, gestures, orality, movement, dance, singing, -in short, all those acts usually thought of as ephemeral, non-

5 Over the last three decades various curating workshops, courses, labs engaged with the new museology concept and critical museology are organised in museum spaces, universities and research centers.

6 Relevant publications relating to the combined fields of intangible cultural heritage and museums available online: <https://www.ichandmuseums.eu/en/bibliography>.

reproducible knowledge. Repertoire, etymologically 'a treasury, an inventory' also allows for individual agency (...). The repertoire requires presence: people participate in the production and reproduction of knowledge by 'being there', being a part of the transmission. As opposed to the supposedly stable objects in the archive, the actions that are the repertoire do not remain the same" (Taylor, 2003: 19–20). Further, Jacobs analyses the impact of the Basic Texts of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the ICH (Convention) and introduces new European heritage policy instruments next to discourses on the operational definition of what a museum is according to ICOM.

Cécile Duvelle in *Le patrimoine culturel immatériel a-t-il une place au musée?* [Does the intangible cultural heritage have a place in a museum?] (pp. 287–299) introduces the limits of correct and conscious use of the widely spread term of ICH, inspirationally revealing misunderstanding of its basic meaning: „Ces approches semblent viser essentiellement à mettre en valeur, dans le patrimoine matériel (le lieu, les objets, les édifices), ses aspects 'immatériels', 'qu'on ne peut pas toucher... Elle le suppose comme indissociable, consubstantiel, explicatif du patrimoine matériel... Mais les aspects immatériels du patrimoine matériel, leur contextualisation sociale, historique ou ethnographique, ne peuvent être confondus avec le patrimoine culturel immatériel lui-même, qui a une existence propre et indépendante. Le patrimoine culturel immatériel existe en effet de manière autonome, sans nécessairement dépendre d'un lieu ou d'un objet. Inscrit dans l'esprit de l'être humain, connaissances et savoir-faire, il se déplace avec l'humain en qui il est ancré, au gré de ses migrations et mouvements" [These approaches seem to aim primarily at highlighting, in the material heritage (place, objects, buildings), its 'intangible aspects', 'which cannot be touched'... It assumes it as inseparable, consubstantial, explanatory of the tangible heritage... But the intangible aspects of tangible heritage, their social, historical or ethnographic contextualization, cannot be confused with intangible cultural heritage

itself, which has its own and independent existence. Intangible cultural heritage indeed exists autonomously, without necessarily depending on a place or an object. Inscribed in the spirit of the human being, knowledge and know-how, it moves with the human in whom it is anchored, according to its migrations and movements"] (pp. 289–290). Next, she analyses the relationship between heritage bearers' communities and scientists in the frame of ICH identification based on the Convention wording („L'expert scientifique devient le facilitateur, l'accoucheur, le médiateur. Il doit savoir s'incliner devant l'opinion des détenteurs..." [The scientific expert becomes the facilitator, the midwife, the mediator. He must know how to bow to the opinion of holders...] (p. 292)) and introduce the problem of safeguarding/protecting/preserving the ICH (limits of "conservation", although ICH continues to evolve in the living community). Very concrete and current questions are posed concerning the form and possibilities of ICH presentation in the museums (how to present ICH without reducing it to its material aspect, how to present ICH which is inseparably linked with its community of bearers etc.).

Amereswar Galla in his article *Discursive Crossings in Liminal Spaces* (pp. 301–314) indicates the need for revision of binary heritage formations (natural/cultural; tangible/intangible) influenced by modernity and the coloniality paradigm and predict the next decade as a decolonising period for rethinking the institution of the museum and perception of the sustainable heritage development in the context of pandemic realities, environmental and climate crisis.

Janet Blake in the contribution *Participation in Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage Viewed as a Human Rights Imperative* (pp. 315–337), identifies the tensions associated with the dual global and local character of heritage. She presents current international law calls for democratization of the heritage protection through community participation, characterizes the specific role of the local museums and locates the role of museums within the context of human rights related to ICH safeguarding mentioned in the Convention.

Marc Jacobs in his next article *On Levels, (Politics of) Scale, Cases and Networking* (pp. 339–355) analyses different currently mentioned notions (“case studies”) as tools to study the impact of the Basic Texts of the Convention, and focuses on questionable terms like “Eurocentric”. He also indicates the limits of using the overall results and reporting.

Hanna Schreiber in her complex paper *Squaring the Circle? In Search of the Characteristics of the Relationship between Intangible Cultural Heritage, Museums, Europe and the EU* (pp. 357–371) indicates quantitative and qualitative data as the number of inscriptions from European countries to the Representative List of ICH as one of the pieces of proofs of the interest of EU states in the Convention and she pays attention to the role of museums visible in nomination files. In addition, she examines the EU definition of ICH in practice and identifies funds and programmes to reveal its interpretations of ICH. At the end, she identifies the risks and limits in the process of including ICH in the current EU and museums’ heritage policies (for example oversimplification and commercialization in case of inscriptions to the Representative List).

Filomena Sousa in her essay *Is ‘Bottom-Up’ a Condescending Expression? Tales of Indignation and Reflexivity* (pp. 373–379) presents the increasingly important role of ICH practitioners (the bottom-up model) and refers to two episodes helping to reconsider current concepts: her experience during co-operation on the ICH Inventory in the Portuguese municipality of Elvas and report about the presence of a Choral Group of Cante Alentejano in the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of ICH in Paris in 2014.

M. Jacobs in *Pourquoi? [Why?] Why Museology and Museums Should – more than ever – be Part of the Heritage Paradigm...* (pp. 381–387) reacts to the ironic article of French museologist Serge Chaumier *Why museology should no longer be a part of heritage...* published in a book *Nouvelles tendances de la muséologie* [New tendencies of museology] in 2016. M. Jacobs accentuates the need of co-operation between museology and heritage

studies. Florence Pizzorni Itié in her article *Le PCI et les musées. Quand l’esprit vient à la matière sous l’arbre à palabres* [PCI and museums. When the spirit comes to matter under a palaver tree] (pp. 389–403) proposes a concept of museum open to ICH as the palaver tree of future societies. She presents the current challenge of museums to review their roles and functions in society and identifies new forms of museums developing in the global cities as spaces open to the political and cultural repertoires, platforms for different approaches to knowledge through physical proximity, verbal and sensorial contact. The author has the inspirational idea of the power of (difficult to verbalize) fascination of heritage objects that can only be understood by comprehension of all the interactions, context and intentionality, and of immaterial objects as an added value to the performativity for the museum („Le patrimoine culturel immatériel ré-enchant le musée.” [ICH re-enchants the museum] (p. 403).

Tamara Nikolić Đerić in her article *Intersections Bridging the Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage Practices* (pp. 405–414) explores the ICOM Code of Ethics for Museums and the Convention’s Directives as communication points between the museum and ICH sector on a theoretical and practical level, helping heritage practices oriented on future society.

Sarah Kenderdine in *Re-enactment and Intangible Heritage. Strategies for Embodiment and Transmission in Museums* (pp. 415–428) introduces three innovative interesting cultural heritage digitisation research projects (the living heritage of martial arts in Hong Kong, the reconstruction of Confucian ritual and performance of the poetic oeuvre from Singapore). She then points to these example technologies as multimodal encoding, algorithmic re-enactment, re-combinatory narrative and kinaesthetic digital interfaces as new forms of museological experience with the potential to transmit ICH: “digital ‘remaking’ of ICH is a fundamental means of safeguarding knowledge for the future” (p. 428).

Sophie Elpers in her article *Past and Future Presencing in Museums. Four Cases of*



*Engaging with Intangible Heritage from the Netherlands* (pp. 429–442) uses four examples from Netherlands (Catharijneconvent, Zeeuws Museum, Open Air Museum and Museum Rotterdam) to present possibilities of cooperation of museums with contemporary ICH and its bearers (current issues being the search for social cohesion and identity in a diverse secular society with religious roots, call for the revival of traditional handicrafts in order to shape a sustainable future, question of how to remember slavery in a postcolonial society and challenge to shape a shared and sustainable future in a super diverse city).

Sergio Servellón and landscape architect Leen Van de Weghe in their contribution *Avant-Garde & Status Quo. The FeliXart Museum and its Paradoxical Legacy* (pp. 443–454) present the evolution of a small Belgian regional museum in Drogenbos named FeliXart Museum. It has been transformed from a “classic” monographic museum to a project presenting and reconciling artistic and ecological aspects, both characteristic of avant-garde Belgian painter and farmer Felix De Boeck (1898–1995). The authors further present the ensemble of a museum, a farm, and an orchard as the platform of inclusion of ICH and creation of local community cohesion and participatory approach (inspiring and effective concept of “I Felix – We Felix”: “next to an ‘elitist’ research-driven art museum, a community museum is being set up around the farm as a place where schools, social services, or associations feel at home and can organize activities”, p. 449). Concrete activities include even very practical steps, supporting even biodiversity aims (for example every first Sunday of the spring and summer months they organise a participatory workshop in the herb garden taking care of different plants and using Felix’s old furnace for culinary uses with volunteers and community).

Alessandra Broccolini, Valentina Lopicirella Zingari, Pietro Clemente and archaeologists Tommaso Lussu and Claudio Gnessi worked out the contribution *In Rural Villages and the Suburbs. Italian Experiences with Museums and Eco-museums* (pp. 455–468). They review the connection between the museum paradigm and the ICH safeguarding challenges by giving examples of good practice of two projects from different Italian areas (rural and urban): the Casa Lussu as an example of the importance of local museums in traditional skill revitalization (weaving), and the Casilino Ecomuseum as an example of citizen initiative ecomuseum possibilities in the urban community.

In his article *Szopka Krakowska. The Nativity Scene Tradition and the Museum of Kraków* (pp. 469–480) Andrzej Iwo Szoka presents the history of the cooperation of the museologists with the nativity scene crib makers in the last eighty years including the communist era situation, when bearers of tradition were supported mainly by museums. He reveals specific “economic” or “community” tasks of museums and writes about modification and changes of the Szopka tradition stimulated by inscription on the Representative List of the ICH of Humanity in 2018.

The final contribution of M. Jacobs and J. Neyrinck *Transforming, Not Saving Intangible Cultural Heritage, Museums and/or the World* (pp. 481–502) considers the content of this issue of *Volkskunde* in the context of a previous special issue (2014) focused on cultural brokerage and safeguarding ICH (including interesting themes of political leadership influencing museum policies). The theme and the articles are discussed in context of other scholarly literature, publications, international debates, initiatives and project results (for example the interesting concept of “heritage house-guarding” of Nadezhda Savova<sup>7</sup>) as well

7 Concept to interpret safeguarding in museum or community centre with a building and a (semi-)public space that citizens (communities, groups, individuals) can enter and use: “...these houses of different sizes, design, participants, and politics, offer much more tangible options than the long documents filled with generic terms and wishful talking. Indeed, the (...) multi-functionality turns them into polyphonic spaces for both modern and traditional arts through heritage houseguarding” (Savova, 2013: 144).

as in the subsequent phases of the paradigm of the Convention in the future. The authors further identify three approaches that can be applied by museums or other research institutions in relation to ICH: a contributory, a collaborative and a co-creation model (p. 501). In the co-creation model, the local communities initiate the projects and the projects originate outside academic institutions, even specialists can take part in the community team. This model is proclaimed by authors as “the one most compatible with what ‘safeguarding’ is about” (p. 501). This potentially contradictory declamation raises the question of further methodological and professional discussion.

This publication concentrates original empirical knowledge and practical experience of innovative approaches to making cultural heritage accessible as a result of cooperation between museologists, ethnologists, cultural anthropologists, historians, archaeologists with a wide platform of volunteers and activists, emphasizing a community approach. They bring theoretical-conceptual reflections concerning the relationship between ICH communities and museums mostly with inspirational and original (inter)national case-studies aimed at safeguarding ICH in cooperation/interaction of museums and heritage communities. In context of participatory approach, the presented good practice examples and case studies meet the objectives of the *new museology* in redefinition of the relation between museums and their communities as well as a more active role for the public as both visitors and controllers of the curatorial function (Black, 2005) and accomplishes the aims of the new role of museums in tackling discrimination and inequality. “If the new educational strategies are to focus on critical thinking, collaboration and empathy, museums can contribute to this change, although they will need to transform the concept behind site visits with a view to transforming them into participatory and deliberative spaces.” (Ferrer-Fons, Rovira-Martínez, 2021: 356).

## REFERENCES:

- Black, G. (2005). *The Engaging Museum*. London: Routledge.
- Ferrer-Fons, M., Rovira-Martínez, M. (2021). Visiting the Past: A Case Study of Experiential Learning with Young People at Historic Sites. *Slovenský národopis*, 69(4), 345–358.
- Harrison, R. (2013). *Heritage: Critical Approaches*. London: Routledge.
- Hudson, K. (1977). *Museums for the 1980's: a survey of world trends*. Paris: UNESCO, London: Macmillan.
- McCall, V., Gray, C. (2014). Museums and the ‘new museology’: theory, practice and organisational change. *Museum Management and Curatorship*, 29(1), 19–35.
- Mruškovič, Š., Darulová, J., Kollár, Š. (2005). *Múzejníctvo, muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo*. Banská Bystrica: Univerzita Mateja Bela.
- Nikolić Đerić, T., Neyrinck, J., Seghers, E., Tsakiridis, E. (2020). *Museums and intangible cultural heritage. Towards a third space in the heritage sector. A companion to discover transformative heritage practices for the 21st century*. Brugge: Werkplaats immaterieel erfgoed. Available online at: <https://www.ichandmuseums.eu/en/toolbox/book-museums-and-intangible-cultural-heritage>.
- Savova, N. (2013). *Bread and Home: Global Cultural Politics in the Tangible Places of Intangible Heritage (Bulgaria, Cuba, Brazil)*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University.
- Shelton, A. A. (2014). Re-totalizing Culture. Breathing the Intangible into Museum Practice? *Ethnologies*, 36(1), 207–234.
- Stefano, M. L., Davis, P., Corsane, G. (2012). *Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage*. Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer Ltd.
- Taylor, D. (2003). *The Archive and the Repertoire. Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas*. London: Durham.
- Vieregg, H. K., Sgoff, B., Schiller, R. (2004). *Museology and intangible heritage (II)*. München: Museums-Pädagogisches Zentrum ICOFOM.
- Waidacher, F. (1999). *Príručka všeobecnej mu-*

zeológia. Bratislava: Slovenské národné múzeum.

KATARÍNA BABČÁKOVÁ,  
*Lubovňa Museum – Castle in Stará Lubovňa*

ACHIM SAUPE, STEFANIE SAMIDA  
(Eds.):

**Weitergabe und Wiedergabe:  
Dimensionen des Authentischen im  
Umgang mit immateriellem Kultur-  
erbe [Transmission and Interpreta-  
tion: Dimension of the Authenticity  
in Dealing with Intangible Cultural  
Heritage]**

*Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen, 2021, 212 p.*

The choice of the illustration on the book cover brings us closer *pars pro toto* to the theme of this interesting volume. It deals with a wide range of issues and dimensions addressing intangible cultural heritage, which is in the focus of contemporary ethnology and anthropology. It is dedicated to the creation of an interesting holiday, which, among other events, gave impetus to ethnology to deal with cultural heritage issues. This custom is related to the memory of the Prussian soldier and later US General F. Wilhelm Steuben (1730–1794), who contributed during the War of Independence to the education and discipline of US soldiers on their way to victory over the British.

As a result, he became a German-US icon. On the occasion of this event, the Steuben Parade was held for the first time on Fifth Avenue in New York in 1957, which inextricably involves mainly Bavarian and Alpine cultural elements. The aim of this festivity was to preserve in memory the “old homeland”. Ever since, thousands of people dressed in the costumes of carnival organisations or music and military groups have met every third Saturday in September for more than half a century. The event is regularly attended by invited groups from Germany as well to present, at the end, the idea of “common roots” together with the American ones. This happens along with consuming fried sausages and German beer.

The above suggests that the way the holiday is celebrated illustrates the essence of the theme as seen by the authors and compilers of the volume: “transmission-interpretation, as well as a play inspired by the authenticity of the festivity”. This is also confirmed by the music band Aqua String Band, displayed on the cover of the volume. In this picture from 2017, the band, which has existed since the founding of the festival in 1920, is full of colours. The rich variety of costumes adapted to fashion is clearly anchored in the present; however, the clothing style of the performers from the “Roman period” refers to the past or even to the evident grasping of history when celebrating the holiday.

This music band participates in other parades, as well, including the annual New Year’s holiday Mummers Parade in Philadelphia or in the above-mentioned Steuben Parade. The group’s performance is an example of what the authors of the volume seek to describe when they speak about transmission (*Weitergabe*) and interpretation (*Wiedergabe*) of a holiday. In other words, they attempt to highlight the different dimensions of authenticity when dealing with intangible cultural heritage at present. In this sense, the Steuben Parade should not be seen exclusively as a traditional celebration, as it documents the current form of the festivity that has gradually evolved since the 1960s. To describe the process of this development, it is appropriate to use present-day terms such as festivalisation and eventisation, commercialisation and staging, as elaborated on by German ethnologist Gottfried Korff (2006) in his study on new structures of urban culture. The compilers of the volume state that the central role is played by the staging element. But in what way? What remains to be answered is whether this relates to the frequently voiced opinions on authenticity under hard to graspable or definable cultural norms of “intangible heritage” – which is often not accurately translated in German (and I believe that in other languages as well) as intangible cultural heritage – *immaterielles Erbe*. The term “intangible cultural heritage” is tied to the UNESCO Convention for the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003.



The compilers of this extensive peer-reviewed volume, which contains ten studies by different authors, present three important aspects in the introduction, as well possible approaches to this topic. The respective chapters describe the debates about the different theoretical and practical approaches to intangible cultural heritage issues. It is positive that the volume offers to the reader, right in the introductory part, a certain overview of the discussions about the terminology and terms used in relation to the set topic.

The first aspect is that heritage – as well as inheritance – do not relate to the handing down, transmission, and ownership in the direct sense of the word and to the idea that it should be preserved at a 1:1 ratio. As proven by debates on material cultural heritage, such preservation of the original forms often appears only as a pre-set target. The term authenticity, understood in the sense of originality, represents the central category. Therefore, the requirement for conservation or even freezing or fossilisation of phenomena and artefacts is the primary focus in this context. On the other hand, in the case of intangible cultural heritage, authenticity has a different meaning, as it relates to “dynamic heritage” which can be “ascribed new contents”, as noted by A. Meyer-Rath (2007). Living heritage thus stands in opposition to material cultural heritage, as it does not refer to “freezing” or “fossilisation”. On the contrary, intangible cultural heritage does not seek to preserve non-tangible phenomena unchanged or to safeguard them. Intangible cultural expressions, which are constantly “on the move” and in constant connection with people and their mnemotechnical expressions, require different ways of perception and conservation. Cultural phenomena and occasions, such as rituals, dances, ceremonial parades, cannot be perceived “monolithically”, as they have a procedural character – they are preserved by transmission and presentation. Their staging or interpretation is not always planned, and are therefore considered “unique and non-recurring” (E. Fischer-Lichte, 2004). On the other hand, there are types of staging that are planned, yet are unique and unrepeatable, while bringing new elements from time to time. This open character of non-material



forms of culture often leads to discussion or momentary tensions between performers or the individual groups of the community. The question therefore remains how many changes in the text are still acceptable? What also remains an open issue is what happens if “the cultural concept is penetrated by dynamic culture that constantly changes in the course of concrete staging and interpretation and is subsequently fixed in written form, thus becoming cultural heritage?” Doesn’t it work as US cultural anthropologist Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett (2004: 56) noted: “If it is truly vital, it does not need safeguarding; if it is almost dead, safeguarding will not help”?

Another aspect considered by the compilers of the volume is experience or the ability to estimate the cultural purity and “authenticity” of a phenomenon. Nevertheless, the authenticity of a phenomenon is not accessible – recognisable without staging. However, if we perceive culture as a dynamic concept, the structure of which is subject to constant creation and change, then this paradox dissolves.

The third aspect that would remain, according to the compilers, outside the debates on non-material cultural heritage is its meaning itself – in the following manner: where UNESCO mentions intangible heritage, it seems

to refer to explicit knowledge or express customs and rituals, dances, music, and craft techniques. Rosmarie Beier-de Haan (2005) rightly pointed out that, in this context, the “implicit” meanings of intangible heritage remained aside. Subsequently, in 2005, she asked a question of, for example, who deals with the collection of data on breakfast in German and Austrian households, including conversations conducted during breakfast? Or are there any researchers recording the behaviour of guests in the café of a supermarket or while consuming food in McDonald’s? Isn’t it all part of implicit cultural heritage? How can we deal with it? Is it reasonable to assume that eating in a fast food chain is equivalent to cultural heritage as a cultural practice and, if so, to what extent? At first glance, we would consider everyday practice. Apart from further thinking about similar issues, the author pointed out through her – seemingly provocative – examples the “painful spot” when it comes to intangible cultural heritage.

This suggests another question: what attitude will ethnology or cultural anthropology take to the term “intangible cultural heritage”? Several studies in this volume focus on this topic by placing emphasis on issues related to authenticity, originality, as well as the acceptance of changes and the “lived” (living) practice of intangible cultural heritage. Two moments of handing down and safeguarding of heritage are therefore in the centre of attention: the transmission and interpretation of cultural heritage, in which authenticity is not only preserved, but also re-interpreted. This process involves local actors who dispose of their own cultural practice.

However, the published collection of studies asks several topical questions from the expert community, such as: What is the sense of exploring intangible cultural heritage for the cultural history of the present? What role does such research play in explaining the mutual recognition of “cultures” and “communities”, as well as national, ethnic, religious, and other specific identities? And finally, a specific question is: which cultural standardisations contribute to the understanding of intangible cultural heritage and to the transfer of obtained knowledge

for educational purposes? The outlined subjects are developed by the team of authors of this extensive volume, which offers materials from excellent field research illustrated by authentic documentation from several European and non-European regions.

## REFERENCES:

- Beier-de Haan, R. (2005). *Erinnerte Geschichte – Inszenierte Geschichte: Ausstellungen und Museen in der Zweiten Moderne*. Berlin: Suhrkamp Verlag.
- Fischer-Lichte, E. (2004). Einleitung. Theatralität als kulturelles Modell. In: E. Fischer-Lichte, C. Horn, S. Umathum, M. Warstat (Eds.), *Theatralitätsmodell in den Kulturwissenschaften* (pp. 7–26). Tübingen/Basel: A. Francke Verlag.
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B. (2004). Intangible Heritage as Metacultural Production. *Museum International*, 56(1–2), 52–65.
- Korff, G. (2013). Neue Strukturen einer urbanen Festkultur. Auf dem Weg zu einer Festivalisierung und Kommerzialisierung. In: *Simplität und Sinnfälligkeit, Volkskundliche Studien zu Ritual und Symbol* (pp. 87–101), Tübingen: TVV.
- Meyer-Rath, A. (2007). Zei-nah, Welt-Fern? Paradoxien in der Prädikatisierung von immateriellem Kulturerbe. In: Prädikat “Heritage”. In: D. Hemme, M. Tauschek, R. Bendix (Eds.), *Prädikat “Heritage”: Wertschöpfungen aus kulturellen Ressourcen* (pp. 147–176). Berlin: LIT.

MAGDALÉNA PARÍKOVÁ,  
Bratislava

**JAROSLAVA PANÁKOVÁ:**  
**Vizuálne režimy ruskej Beringie**  
[Visual regimes of Russian Beringia]  
*Ústav etnológie a sociálnej antropológie*  
SAV – VEDA SAV, Bratislava 2020, 127 p.

For quite some time I have paid attention to the way anthropologists (specifically those focusing on material culture research and more particularly the theme of home) approach visual data in their research (Lutherová, 2010). Usually, they do not include visual data in the actual analysis, and rather use them as a mere tool for illustrating the field or living environment of their informants or (if you will) their partners in the research. Because of this, they ignore the range of culturally inflected relationships enmeshed and encoded in the visual (MacDougall, 1999: 288). Their reluctance originates in the uncertainty about what to do with the visual data (Banks, 2001). However, this is certainly not the case with Jaroslava Panáková. She does not avoid visual data in her research, nor is she uncertain about what to do with it.

In her book, Panáková analyzes the conditions of the emergence, formation, and transformation of visual systems in Russian Beringia. The starting point of the book is as follows: how do people with different cultural backgrounds see things and how do they depict what they see? As Panáková points out, she does not focus only on seeable and tangible visual products, but also on abstract concepts which co-create the visual culture of the specific social groups. This brings us to the core of Panáková's book: how do the changing technological, economic, and societal conditions (shaped by the modernization process) reflect in the way people see and express themselves visually? Panáková's focus on visual culture in the broad sense of the term presupposes a certain analytical strategy. She lays claim to the anthropological holistic approach to the study of visibility, which does not stop at "the contents and forms of the visual representations", but opts for asserting the world through pictures and visualizations (p. 18). She works with the concept of the visual regime, which enables her to put different particularities of the system of representations



under scrutiny, such as their time, place, and socio-economic as well as political context.

Panáková supports her reasoning with rich ethnographic data, acquired during her fieldwork in the Russian Beringia region in periods of time in 2008, 2010, 2011, and 2014. In the field, she used various research methods, such as participant observation, in-depth interviews, and visual anthropological photo-elicitation. In her book, Panáková is both rigorous and personal, seamlessly sliding between different genres of academic text. I also need to appraise the graphic design of the book and – more particularly – the use of the visual data in it. The assembly of photographs works well with the reasoning, but it also touches the reader on an emotional level as it sets the mood of the writing.

In the first part of the book, the author introduces the topic, creating a line of thoughts that links together different sub-themes supported by various types of data. In the second chapter, she focuses on the changes in artistic expression in different aesthetic strategies, methods, and preferences over the years of the Soviet modernization of Russian Beringia. The field research mainly covered the coastal villages of Novoe Chaplino and Yanrakynnot (Chukotka region) inhabited by people mainly of Yupik and Chukchi origin. As Panáková writes, the region has been perceived as the most distant area of the Soviet empire and it has functioned as sort of a model of an experimental laboratory of the Soviet modernization. In the second part of the chapter, Panáková examines this idea by focusing on the changes in artistic expression through analysis of the

drawings of 22 school-age children. Adopting Masuda's theory of the relationship between perceptual holism/analytism, Panáková confirms that artistic representational strategy is influenced by social models and patterns of environmental interaction, which produce corresponding cognitive styles.

In the third chapter, the author moves to the examination of home photography and biographical narratives. She uses the data from interviews, equipping the visual anthropological method of photo-elicitation. She has built her analysis on the assembled photographs and biographical narratives acquired through the following in-depth interviews. The construction of visual representations reflects the way people see themselves and their living environment, and through this process they inevitably reshape themselves. This process, albeit unconscious, is examinable by analyzing visual data acquired in different forms and contexts. Panáková confronts the visual data with narratives and argues that there are significant differences in the way people construct the notion of self, personal integrity, and happiness in one or the other.

The photographs provide the analytical backbone in the fourth chapter as well. In this case, it is the photographs of the deceased members of the community placed on the graves at the cemetery.<sup>1</sup> The study shows that the collective memory remains dependent on the traditional mechanism, which does not rely on photographs originating in the Soviet practice. It rather relies on the specific traditional rituals such as the feeding of the spirits and other existing practices.

In the last empirical chapter, Panáková puts her attention to domestic photographs – specifically depicting families and individuals in their home environments. She puts particular visual practice under scrutiny, focusing on the tradition of taking family photographs in front of the “Persian” carpet hanging on the wall. This

home decoration is related to the idealized notion of the household of a true Soviet citizen and is still prevalent today. Once again, Panáková presents the origins, development, and changes of function and meanings of this phenomenon in Chukotka throughout the modernization of the region.

In her book *Vizuálne režimy ruskej Beringie* [Visual regimes of Russian Beringia]<sup>2</sup>, Jaroslava Panáková successfully follows a recipe for a “tasty” anthropological monograph. She studies a diverse cultural phenomenon, reflecting on the everyday life of individuals, their perception of selves, and their place in the world around them. She draws her arguments on her thorough knowledge of the studied community and extensive ethnographic data of great variety. Throughout the book, she is both contemplative and scientifically rigorous. Because of this, she makes the reading informative, but also a very intriguing journey.

PS: As I have struggled with this myself in the past (Lutherová, 2009), I was intrigued by the way Panáková translated the English term “agency” of things into the Slovak language. Panáková opted for the term “dejstvoval”. It seems suitable from a purely semantic point of view, but archaic Russianism might not be the best option. However, it is a relevant option worth further consideration.

## REFERENCES:

- Banks, M. (2001). *Visual methods in social research*. London; Thousand Oaks; New Delhi: SAGE.
- Lutherová, S. (2009). Konštruovanie vlastníctva a domova. *Slovenský národopis*, 57(4), 367–385.
- Lutherová, S. G. (2010). Investigating the visual dimension of material culture research on the home. *Slovenský národopis*, 58(5), 614–627.
- MacDougall, D. (2009). The visual in anthro-

<sup>1</sup> The chapter provides a continuation of the previous text on this particular subject on the pages of this journal (Panáková, 2014).

<sup>2</sup> Sadly, the book is only published in the Slovak language, but it also provides a short English summary.

pology. In: M. Banks, H. Morphy (Eds.), *Rethinking Visual Anthropology* (pp. 276–296). New Haven, CT/London: Yale University.  
Panáková, J. (2014). The Grave Portraits and Ancestralization of the Dead (The Case of

New Chaplino). *Slovenský národopis*, 62(4), 505–521.

SOŇA G. LUTEROVÁ,  
*Institute of Ethnology and Social  
Anthropology of SAS in Bratislava*