PEJZAŻE KULTURY ▼

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PROGRAMMING THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE CITY – PARADIGMS AND PERCEPTION. THE CASE OF THE ANCIENT CITY OF NESSEBAR

Abstract: Having developed gradually over time, historic city areas embody the values of culture both tangible and intangible. The UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage draws attention also to the intangible dimension of the historic urban landscape that enrich and extend the content of its outstanding universal value. However, the material culture in historic city areas is the center in the national preservation process of many countries. On one hand, the strategy of conservation and protection of intangible cultural heritage is governed by the standards and paradigms based on elements of traditional culture and folklore, and on the other hand, there is a growing trend of monitoring urban environment heritage, within the process of metropolization. Mapping the intangible cultural heritage includes strategies and indicates possibilities for the development of the ancient city of Nessebar community in the intangible cultural heritage unique to the investigated area.

Key words: Intangible cultural heritage (ICH), historic city areas, UNESCO Convention of 2003, community-based participatory research (CBPR), the Ancient City of Nessebar

1. Introduction

Intangible heritage is a coherent whole, a focal point for national identity and experience transmitted through the ages, ensuring effective protection of cultural diversity in the context of sustainable development and intercultural dialogue. Under the provisions of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of 2003, evidence of intangible heritage has been recognized as a basic factor in the development of cultural identity.

At a time when cultural assets have become a global resources – the *terra nullius* of the 21st century[1] – some general issues emerge at the crossroads of cultural heritage management, public domain, traditional knowledge and academic or applied research, all of

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[1]   V. Johnson, 2001. *Getting over terra nullius; Australian Registrars Committee Conference. Melbourne, Australia.* http://www.eniar.org/news/art13.html (access: 21.06.2015).

which are more related to the questions of human dignity and cultural continuity than to the economic factors. Equally problematic are conceptions that portray cultural heritage of the local communities.[2]

In response to the challenges of globalization and cultural assets commodification, people have become increasingly interested in the concepts of 'local distinctiveness' as they are closely associated with the construction and re-construction of identities and feelings of belongings. Intangible cultural heritage can be perceived as the very essence of this local distinctiveness.

From the beginning of the 1990s, public debates have opened up many questions focusing on social networks, self-identification, human and minority rights.[3] At the same time, cultural heritage was still described in words such as 'cultural property' which immediately indicate the commodity value of cultural heritage in world global economic and political systems.[4] The introduction of the notion of intangible cultural heritage by the Convention of 2003 – as a culturally marked and marking product – has a representative/performative and public character and can be related to the symbolic discourses of interpretation.[5] This interpretation of intangible culture is in accordance with the definition of heritage that emphasis the engagement with a set of values and meanings including such elements as emotions, memory, cultural knowledge and experiences.[6]

The UNESCO Convention 2003 has establish new administrative rules and strategies of identification, preservation and protection of intangible cultural heritage – the turning point in the process of promoting intangible cultural heritage.[7] The Convention of 2003 is based on the existing documents of international law concerning cultural and natural heritage. In accordance with the resolutions of the Convention, it is possible to define intangible heritage as all elements and forms of spiritual and social culture which are transferred through generations of a community, or a group, providing them with a sense of continuity and identity (Art. 2). The basic responsibility of the state, in the thought of the Convention, is identifying and introducing protection for intangible cultural heritage in its territory. In the process of protecting intangible cultural heritage, the Convention also envisioned the necessity of ensuring local communities wide access to creating descriptions of given objects if needed.

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[2] M.F. Brown, 2004. Heritage as property. In K. Verdery & C. Humphrey (eds), *Property in Question: Value Transformation in the Global Economy* (pp. 49-68). Oxford: Berg; M.F. Brown, 2005. Heritage trouble: recent work on the protection of intangible cultural property. *International Journal of Cultural Property* 12: 40-61.

[3] M. Castells, 2000. Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society. *British Journal of Sociology* 51(1): 5-24; T.H. Eriksen, 2001. Between universalism and relativism: A critique of the UNESCO concept of culture. In J.K. Cowan & H.-B. Dembour (eds), *Culture and Rights: Anthropological Perspective* (pp. 127-148). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[4] Y. Hamilakis, 2007. From ethics to politics. In Y. Hamilakis & P. Duke (eds), *Archaeology and Capitalism: from Ethics to Politics* (pp. 15-40). Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

[5] S. Hall, 1997. Introduction. In S. Hall (ed.), *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (pp. 1-11). London: Sage; M. Foucault, 1972. *The Archaeology of Knowledge and The Discourse on Language*. New York: Pantheon Books.

[6] L. Smith, 2006. *Uses of Heritage*. London: Routledge, p. 56.

[7] J.M. Nas, 2002. Masterpieces of oral and intangible culture: Reflections on the UNESCO World Heritage List. *Current Anthropology* 43(1): 139-148.

Since the adoption of the UNESCO 2003 Convention, intangible cultural heritage has been the subject of a significant academic debate.[8] It has come under scrutiny not only in its emergence, in the context of the provisions of the UNESCO Convention and the creation of the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity,[9] but also because of its broader impact on current cultural practice and practitioners.[10]

Heritage is perceived as providing a special sense of belonging, but also it reflects the complexities of how communities define and negotiate their symbols, memory and identity.[11] Strategies for heritage preservation and safeguarding pertain simultaneously to the regulation and negotiation of the multiplicity of meaning in the past and to the mediation and arbitration of the cultural and social politics of identity and belonging.[12]

The attempts contained in the UNESCO Conventions of a complete understanding of places and spaces are also a search of formulas of experience, feelings and emotions connecting people with particular places.[13] From sociological perspective, heritage ensures the individual feeling of belonging to a particular community and constructs in the shaping of economic and cultural capital within the political scenes.

Places and self-identification issues play important role in the new museology concepts. According to Corsane's and Holleman's statement,[14] landscape is consistent with the 'holistic' paradigm of museology as it provides a strong identification of the importance of place, in both tangible and intangible contexts. However, it is a chameleon concept.[15] In Relph's view places occur at all levels of identity[16] and never conform to a tidy hierarchy or classification. Buttimer, in his turn, states that the lifestyle itself, associated with places, is far more important than the places themselves.[17] Nevertheless, despite these complexities, places provide peoples with the sense of belonging and they are a key resources in the processes of construction or reconstruction individual cultural identity, at both the regional and national levels.

[8]   M. Santova, 2007. *Construire un inventaire: L'example bulgare, Symposium Le patrimoine culturel immaterial de l'Europe: inventer son inventaire, Institut National du Patrimoine*, Paris 30 novembre 2007; S. von Lewinski, 2008. *International Copyright Law and Policy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; N. Akagawa & L. Smith, 2008. *Intangible Heritage*. London: Routledge.

[9]   V. Tr. Hafstein & R. Bendix, 2009. Culture and property. An introduction. *Ethnologia Europaea* 39(2): 5; W. Wendland, 2004. Intangible cultural heritage and intellectual property: Challenges and future prospects. *Museum International* 56(1-2): 97-107.

[10] R. Kurin, 2004. Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage in the 2003 UNESCO Convention: A critical appraisal. *Museum International* 56(1-2): 66-77; R. De Jong, 1993. *Museums and the Environment*. Pretoria: Southern Africa Museums Association.

[11] J. Agnew, 1987. *Place and Politics: The Geographical Mediation of State and Society*. London: Allen & Unwin.

[12] M. Augé & J.-P. Colleyn, 2006. *The World of the Anthropologist*. Oxford & New York: Berg.

[13] E. Relph, 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion.

[14] G. Corsane & W. Holleman, 1993. Ecomuseums: a brief evaluation. In R. De Jong (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 121.

[15] P. Davis, 1999. *Ecomuseum: A Sense of Place*. London: Leicester University Press, p. 18.

[16] E. Relph, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

[17] A. Buttimer, 1980. Home, reach and the sense of place. In A. Buttimer & D. Seamon (eds), *The Human Experience of Space and Place*. London: Croom Helm, p. 178.

The aim of this article is to highlight the synergies between the state's intangible culture heritage management and the philosophy and practice of the local communities concerning the safeguarding, promotion and management of intangible cultural assets associated with the Ancient City of Nessebar area.

In order to do this, the article will begin with an introductory discussion on the links between communities, defining places and the significance of heritage resources. This will be followed by an overview of the principles of the community-based research, which will be the foundation for considering the involvement of the members of the Ancient City of Nessabar community in the intangible cultural heritage unique to the investigated area.

2. Intangible cultural heritage and national policies

The traditional, state-mandated management of cultural assets and historical sites gives national authorities a privileged position in the processes of identification, evaluation and, where it is possible or needed, protection of cultural heritage. The main goal of states' official mandate is to safeguard heritage sites or/and assets that may be affected by the urban or economic development or by other human activities. This model of cultural heritage management claims to be based on a "stewardship model" – developed by official and professional circles, particularly in Western Europe and North America.[18] It not only refers to the state-sanctioned management and protection of cultural heritage, but it also privileges Western value systems at the expense of other, non-expert ways of relating to the "artefacts", "sites", and other cultural and historical manifestations of, or ways of knowing, the past. Empowering local communities to articulate their own customary methods of transmitting the past is often a step towards using this as a guideline in policy and decision-making in their interactions with external authorities. This, in turn, can lead to new interpretations of concepts of cultural heritage and resources, and new interpretations of cultural rights. Actually, attention has been turned to the intangible value of cultural heritage and practices as a traditional framework for understanding and interpreting tangible cultural properties.

More recently, various academic, scientific, non-governmental groups as well as other actors contest and put into question this privileged position of the stage-sanctioned cultural heritage management. These discussions have been broadened consequently, to include the rights of local and/or descendant communities to control, protect, and share their own notions of tangible and intangible cultural heritage and to promote it on their own terms.[19]

To their credit, strides have been made in recognizing the community members rights to involvement and participation in decision making concerning their own heritage as groups

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[18]   M.J. Lynott & A. Wylie, 2000. *Ethics in American Archaeology: Challenges for the 90ᵉ* (2ⁿᵈ ed.). Washington, DC: Society for American Archaeology.

[19]   J.E. Watkins, 2000. *Indigenous Archaeology: American Indian Values and Scientific Practice*. Walnut: Altamira Press; L. Smith, 2004. *Archaeological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage*. London: Routledge; B. Anderson, 2006. *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso.

that might have a special relationship to certain aspects of the tangible and intangible expressions of the past and traditional ways of their transmission for future generations.[20]

However, a gap still remains between the decision-making process concerning cultural heritage and the involvement of the descendant communities. Many professionals from both academic and administrative circles still have troubles in recognizing the rights to their own interpretation. In turn, local communities claim special attachment not only to cultural objects, but to the cultural knowledge itself and they seek full participation in the protection and management of tangible and intangible heritage.

Nevertheless, the model which engaged the members of local communities can be the foundation of the culturally and ethically appropriate forms of heritage management and protection.

Taking into account the latest development of cultural heritage management strategies, heritage can be perceived as the communities' relationship to the past in the present. We can distinguish threes key principles of the community-based heritage management: the respect for communities' own ways of interpreting, transmitting and presenting the past, the call for a greater equity in the decision-making process that involves the participation of multiple actors, and the ability to have one's decision count.[21]

Recently, cultural heritage management issues often revolve around claims that community members make about the use of artefacts and the marketing and commodification issues concerning cultural assets. All of these occur in a climate where broad implication of the digital flow of information, in this sense, also that of traditional knowledge and other cultural resources – has become global. The commercialization of cultural heritage is not the only issue. The concerns of communities are more focused on the questions of how these assets are used and who benefits from them. In recent decades, due to these reasons communities were forced to choose between sharing their cultural resources with states' authorities or allowing sites and objects to be explore in an abusive or illicit manner.

The implementation of the UNESCO 2003 Convention has drawn attention to the idea of the museum as a repository of both tangible and intangible forms of culture. Engaging with intangible cultural heritage raises the issue of participatory museology,[22] and evokes ideas of cultural inclusion and dialogue.[23] It also provides a framework for rethinking contemporary museum work and the relation between tangible and intangible heritage. The model of museum of living history hints a new exclusivity inherent of the power of self-representation, as groups that had historically been marginalized are now actively involved in museum

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[20] C. Bell & V. Napoleon, 2008. Introduction, methodology and thematic overview. In C. Bell & V. Napoleon (eds), *First Nations Cultural Heritage and Law: Case Studies, Voices and Perspectives* (pp. 1-32). Vancouver: UB Press.

[21] G.P. Nicholas & J. Hollowell, 2007. Ethical challenges to a postcolonial archaeology. In Y. Hamilakis & P. Duke (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 59-82.

[22] Sh. Watson, 2007. *Museums and their Communities*. New York: Routledge; I. Karp, M. Kreamer & Ch. Mullen, 1992. *Museum and Communities: The Politics and Public Culture*. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Books.

[23] Ch. Kreps, 2003. *Liberation Culture: Cross-Cultural Perspectives on Museums, Curation and Heritage Preservation*. London: Routledge; J. Butler, 2006. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York & London: Routledge Classics.

work.[24] The most actual and concise definition of ecomuseum was adopted by the European Network of Ecomuseums (2004)[25] stating that: "An ecomuseum is a dynamic way in which communities preserve, interpret, and manage their heritage for sustainable development. An ecomuseum is based on a community agreement.' This definition has been further broadened by Davis (2007:199)[26] who regards the ecomuseum as a community-driven museum. It would seem that the key principles for ecomuseums should enable them to conserve local communities in a democratic manner and effectively capture local distinctiveness.

3. Intangible cultural heritage and ethnology

Taking into account the new forms of cultural heritage management, there is an urgent need for engaging in the participatory methods in ethnography research that go far in helping to place control over the protection and management of intangible artefacts in the hands of members of local communities. The use of critical and participatory ethnographic approaches can play an important role in creating a more nuanced, open and cross-cultural understanding of cultural heritage manifestations[27] by exploring the variability of the safeguarding of culturally sensitive assets. Furthermore, ethnography is invaluable in investigating complex issues of identification, safeguarding, and transmission that surround cultural heritage.

Generally, in state-driven cultural policies ethnography has been used primarily to reinforce the official mandate of state authorities. Now, a different paradigm has emerged which tends to ground cultural policy research in customary principles and practices defined by community members. Nowadays, many inspiring examples of the use of ethnographic methods can be seen in the cultural management theory and practice that incorporates scientific practice alongside community-based cultural values in collaborative research.[28] Most of them empower communities to articulate their own protection and management concepts. In this sense, this is an emancipatory use of ethnography for local communities not of local communities.

[24] L.J. Zimmerman, 2000. Regaining our nerve: ethics, values, and the transformation of archaeology. In M.J. Lynott & A. Wylie (eds), *op. cit.*, pp. 64-67.

[25] Declaration of Intent of the Long Net Workshop, May 2004, Trento (Italy). Available from http://www. localworlds.eu/PAPERS/intents.pdf (access 07.2015).

[26]   P. Davis, 2007. Ecomuseums and sustainability in Italy, Japan and China: adaptation through implementation. In S.J. Knell, S. MacLeod & S.E.R. Watson (eds), *Museum Revolutions: How Museums Change and Are Changed*. London & New York: Routledge.

[27] N.K. Denzin, Y.S. Lincoln & L.T. Smith, 2008. *Handbook of Critical and Indigenous Methodologies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

[28] N. Ferris, 2003. Between colonial and indigenous archaeologies: legal and extra-legal ownership of the archaeological past in North America. *Canadian Journal of Archaeology* 27: 54-190.

3.1. Community-based approach

According to Green, community-based participatory research is 'a collaborative approach to research that equitably involves all partners in the research process and recognizes the unique strengths that each brings.[29] It has been also described as a 'systematic inquiry that is collective, collaborative, self-reflective, critical and undertaken by participants in the inquiry that seeks to empower participants and foster social changes.[30] Wadsworth,[31] in his turn, states that the community-based approach 'involves all relevant parties in actively examining together current action (which they experience as problematic) in order to change it and improve it'. The community-based research approach has its roots in both participatory research[32] and action research.[33] Both of these methods require reciprocal and comparative practices by means of the involvement of the 'researched' party in the choice of research problems, co-development of methodology and community-targeted benefits as a part of the research process. Community-based research seeks to break down the distinction between the researchers and the researched and to collaborate with the individuals affected by the issues being investigated. In this sense, the research process is seen not only as a process of gaining and creating knowledge; but, at the same time, as an educational practice. In summary, community-based research promotes a co-learning process, during which community members acquire skill not only in conducting research[34]; but, simultaneously, it develops mobilization for action and an educational and cultural consciousness. The most important outcome of the research methods is the knowledge production by the participants themselves.

Recently, the community-based approach has successfully been employed in many sectors, from public health care to forestry resource management.[35]

Critics of this method[36] have stressed that the relationship between researchers and researched are often less democratic than they are aimed to be. The solution to this problem is to appropriately identify the possible power imbalances. In the design process of the methodology by the researched local communities, it is important to pose questions such as: Whose research is it? Who will benefit from it? Whose intentions does it serve[37]?

[29]   M. Minkler & N. Wallerstein, 2003. *Community Based Participatory Research for Health*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, p. 4.

[30]   C. Bell & V. Napoleon, Introduction..., p. 8; R. Rapoport, 1990. Three dilemmas in action research. *Human Relations* 23(6): 499.

[31]   Y. Wadsworth, 1998. What is participatory action research? Action Research International, Paper 2, http://www.scu.edu.au/schools/gcm/ar/ari/p-ywadsworth98.html (access 21.06.2015).

[32]   W.F. Whyte, 1991. *Participatory Action Research*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

[33]   P. Freire, 1972. *Cultural Action for Freedom*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin.

[34]   B. Israel, A.J. Schulz & E.A. Parker, 1998. Review of community-based research: Assessing partnership approaches to improve public health. *Annual Review of Public Health* 19: 173-202.

[35]   M. Castells, 2000. Materials for an exploratory theory of the network society. *British Journal of Sociology* 51(1): 5-24.

[36]   B. Cooke & U. Kothari, 2001. *Participation: the New Tyranny?* London: Zed Books.

[37]   C. Bell & V. Napoleon, *Introduction...*, p. 10.

4. Intangible cultural heritage in Bulgaria

The Bulgarian intangible cultural heritage safeguarding strategy was elaborated by the academic committee of the Bulgarian Academy of Science and the Ministry of Culture in co-operation with UNESCO representatives. Firstly, Bulgarian national experts have strived to create a synthetic methodology in order to create a national inventory, which would reflect both the theoretical knowledge and research and the current state and form of intangible culture. Secondly, attempts were made to formulate not only contemporary forms of intangible cultural expressions, but also their descriptions that have been preserved from earlier years including those from the last century, to fully show the development and evolution of every form. As a result of that work, the concept of an inventory of Bulgarian intangible heritage arose on the basis of questionnaires conducted throughout the country.[38] After consultation at conferences and seminaries on the national level questionnaires were sent to educational and cultural institutions known as Chitalishta.

Chitalishta play a key role in the organisation, management and transsmition of Bulgarian folklore, traditions and ceremonies. They are units subject to the Ministry of Culture, numbering over 3 500 throughout the country, which ensure proper transmission of intangible culture in local communities.[39] Historically, they were shaped during the Bulgarian National Revival – the first Chitalishta appeared in the 1850 as "reading houses", but their role gradually evolved and they developed as independent entities, offering equal participation and universal access to educational and cultural services on a democratic, grass-roots basis.[40] Their role was adopted in the contemporary system of educational and cultural activity at the local level.

The internet database of Bulgarian intangible culture is a result of the completion of the ЖИВИ ЧОВЕШКИ СЪКРОВИЩА – БЪЛГАРИЯ – UNESCO (Living Human Treasures – UNESCO) project, which lasted from March 2001 to December 2002. Experts from the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture and representatives of the Institute of Folklore of the Bulgarian Academy of Science participated in the project. The website 'Treasures of Bulgaria' was launched as part of this project.[41]

The Bulgarian inventory of intangible culture consists of six categories, which are in relation with the provisions the UNESCO Convention of 2003, namely the non-exhaustive list of Intangible cultural heritage forms (Art. 2.2). In the territorial aspect, the inventory was created on the basis of national administrative divisions. Surveys and questionnaires corresponded with the divisions introduced in the general categories, however each time they contained questions adjusted to a particular region and local communities. For example, in

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[38] M. Santova, 2007. *Construire un inventaire: L'example bulgare, Symposium Le patrimoine culturel immaterial de l'Europe: inventer son inventaire, Institut National du Patrimoine*, Paris 30 novembre 2007.

[39] M. Santova, 2010. Chetvarti godishen seminar na eksperti po nematerialno kulturno nasledstvo v strani ot Yugoiztochna Evropa [Fourth Regional Seminar of Experts of 55 Intangible Cultural Heritage of Countries of Southeastern Europe] (3-7 May 2010, Ramnicu Valchea, Romania). *Balgarski folklor* 3-4: 189-191.

[40] www.chitalishta.com (access 17.06.2015).

[41] E. Grancharova, 2008. Natsionalen seminar „Zhivi chovesnki sakrovishta –Bulgaria" – [National Seminar „Living Human Treasures – Bulgaria"]. Balgarski folklor I, 154–156.

every region, holidays and ceremonies are organized around a central axis, such as: family holidays and ceremonies, religious holidays of the Orthodox Church, celebrating Sabori (holy days associated with the Orthodox Church), holidays of specific cities/villages/places, and traditional holidays for ethnic, sub-ethnic and religious groups. Moreover, characteristic subcategories were added for specific regions: "traditional Muslim holidays" for the Blagoevgrad region, and "tradition Catholic holidays", "traditional Jewish holidays", "traditional Armenian holidays" for the Varna region.

The Treasures of Bulgaria site represents the division of intangible heritage into categories on the national level, known as the basic division into types of expressions of intangible culture:

Traditional holidays and ceremonies, Traditional songs and instrumental compositions, Traditional dances and games for children, Oral tradition, Traditional works of sculpture and domestically made products, Traditional medicine.[42]

5. The Ancient City of Nessebar

The Ancient City of Nessebar is situated on a rocky peninsula of an 850 m long and 350 m wide on the Black Sea. The peninsula is connected to the mainland through a narrow isthmus.

The more than 3,000-year-old site of Nessebar was originally a Thracian settlement (Menebria),than at the beginning of the 6th century BC the city became a Greek colony. The city's archaeological remains, which date mostly from the Hellenistic period, include the acropolis, a temple of Apollo, an agora and a wall from the Thracian fortifications.[43]

According to the data provided by National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Bulgaria[44] there are 17 048 inhabitants in the Nessebar and 1800 residents in the historic area. The most important demographic feature is that in contrast to the general trend of growth of urban population, the population of the Ancient City of Nessebar is virtually constant – 1780 people in 2000 and 1790 in 2010 to 1800 in 2014. In terms of economic characteristics – leading role of tourism and the related to it activities has been registered (comprising over 80% of the income of the population.[45]

The historical evolution of Nessebar during the key historical periods can be divided into following stages:

The Thracian "bria" (until 6th c. B.C.); Antiquity (5th c. B.C.-4th c. A.D.); Late Antiquity and Early Middle Ages (5-9 c.); The Middle Ages (9th-14th c.); Within the Ottoman Empire (1453-1878); Third Bulgarian state from the Liberation until the end of World War II (1878-1945); People's Republic of Bulgaria (1946-1989).

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[42] T. Konach, 2015. Intangible cultural heritage projects – National policies and strategies. The creation of intangible cultural heritage inventories. *ENCATC Journal of Cultural and Policy* 5/1: 67-79.
[43] http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/217 (access 10.06.2015).
[44] http://www.nsi.bg (access 12.06.2015).
[45] http://pou-nesebar.org (access 9.06.2015).

Regarding to immovable heritage sites from the periods listed above we can distinguish four main sites, formed as a result of the historical development:

1. Archaeological heritage sites: the fortification system and archaeological structures (from the Thracian period, the Late Antiquity and the Middle Ages until the last consolidations of the fortification walls during the Ottoman domination);
2. Churches: Early-Christian basilicas, Medieval churches, National Revival period churches (from the 5th c. until the end of the 19th c.);
3. Examples of vernacular architecture – National Revival structures: quarters composed of two-storey Nessebar houses with yards, and narrow, meandering streets;
4. Buildings from the period after the Liberation and from the modern times – most of them with public functions (http://pou-nesebar.org).

In the historic area there are also many expressions of intangible cultural heritage: urban traditions, holidays and customs (the Epiphany – 6th January, The Day of Saints Cyril and Methodius-The Procession for health and well-being – 11th May, The Day of Nessebar-the Assumption, the Day of St. Nicolas, etc.); legends – related mostly to the churches on the peninsula and traditional living, crafts and skills, as fishing, boat building, local cuisine, production of wine, etc.[46]

The Ancient City of Nessebar, as well as its coastline, was declared "a museum, tourist and resort complex of national and international importance" by a Decree of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Bulgaria in 1956. However, the pressure of the tourism industry on the cultural and historic value of the site was visible even in the socialist era.[47] The situation became more complex after the nomination of the Ancient City of Nessebar for the UNESCO List of World Heritage in 1981 and its incorporation into the List at the Seventh session of the Wold Heritage Committee in 1983. Moreover, the rapid change of the political regime and the liberalisation of the economy after 1989 raised new tensions between local inhabitants – the owners of the buildings, newly created private sector in the tourist industry and, also newly-established or reorganised, institutions responsible for the safeguarding and managing of the national cultural heritage.

After 1990 the main institutions in charge of the material cultural heritage assets preservation in Bulgaria are the National Institute for Monuments of Culture and the local municipalities. Therefore, the key role in controlling the processes of preservation and management of the historic sites, especially in negotiating possible changes with the owners, plays the National Institute for Monuments of Culture. The local inhabitants of the Ancient City of Nessebar are very dependent on the decisions of the experts in the capital city. According to the ethnographic survey made by Ana Luleva[48] on the peninsula in 2012, residents of the historic area are dissatisfied with their interactions with this institution, even in their opinion "the National Institute for Monuments of Culture became synonymous with corrupt officials

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[46] http://pou-nesebar.org (access 9.06.2015).
[47] Meeting of the National Institute for Monuments of Culture, June 1986, in: National Institute for Monuments of Culture Archives.
[48] Ana Luleva, Ph.D., Assoc. Professor; Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.

who signed permits in exchange for bribery".[49] It is worth mentioning that local inhabitants, members of the community of the Ancient City of Nessebar made few negative references on the local municipality in their stories about their housing problems.[50]

In the past decade, on several occasions, these misunderstandings turned out to be a real threat for the preservation and management of the Ancient City of Nessebar. In 2007, Nessebar Municipality has moved to terminate an outrageous deal for the construction of a dolphinarium that would have destroyed much of the historic city area. The deal under which a private investor acquired about one-fifth of the area of the entire Black Sea peninsula on which the Ancient City of Nessebar is located, caused a strong public reaction because the construction of the new touristic attraction would have practically destroyed much of the historical and cultural assets and could probably have led to the removal of the UNESCO status from this area. In turn, in 2010 the local inhabitants were accused of destroying the cultural heritage of the Ancient City. In November 2010 members of the local community protested and made several attempts to prevent the demolition of illegally raised upgrades to several houses and shops in the historic area. In several, mostly local newspapers this event was presented as a danger for the site to lose its status.[51]

These conflicts are now part of the past, but the underlying problems of the local community members – residing in a town, declared as world heritage, legal and administrative regulations related to this, trust and distrust in national and local institutions, the experience of notions of cultural (symbolic) capital and its transformation due to economic factors – are still pending and controversial. Since these issues affect directly or indirectly the local community, a considerable activation of the residents of the Ancient City could be observed in the last years.

6. Intangible cultural heritage and the Ancient City of Nessebar community

6.1. First study

The study consisted of ethnographic interviews with twenty individuals. Notably, community members made very few negative references to the state or local authorities, archaeologists, museologists and other cultural heritage practitioners in the interviews. This fact can be explained by the long history of archaeological research in the area of the old city of Nessebar, first archaeological surveys dating back to the 20th century. During the excavations, and in more recent times, the community has been strongly supportive of research and heritage conservation in the area.

Previous ethnographic studies on the peninsula were generally conducted by outside researchers, coming mainly from the capital as experts for the Bulgarian Ministry of Culture

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[49] A. Luleva, 2015. Contested world heritage: the Ancient City of Nessebar. An ethnographic study of the conflict. *Ethnologia Balkanica*, forthcoming, p. 6.
[50] *Ibid.*, p. 7.
[51] n: burgas.news; news.burgas24.bg; razkritia.com; ekipnews.com.

or scholars affiliated with the main universities or national research centers. Quite often, as a result, the contents of their reports were incomplete or/and inaccurate, because of the limited involvement of the local community. Moreover, archaeological work in the area of the Ancient City of Nessebar focused on documenting site features to the exclusion of other information. In contrast, at the core of this study were interviews with members of the local community: elders, land users, and other cultural bearers, in order to gather knowledge and experience of place, landscapes, and traditional practices. For this study, the local community was recognized as a unity in terms of a geographical area, but also as a community of shared identity that is geographically dispersed but its members hold a sense of common identity.

The study had three main goals. The first was to facilitate an understanding of the expressions of the local intangible cultural heritage. The second goal was to examine problems relating to interpretation of these cultural forms. The third goal was to identify the most sensitive elements of the local intangible culture.

The study's findings pointed two main concerns about the local cultural heritage according to the members of the local community: the potential for the commercial use of expressions of intangible cultural heritage (traditions, religious feats) and the destructive activity, in social terms, of the archaeological work in relation to churches and the other religious sites. The most sensitive cultural asset that was identified by the members of the community was the Messembria Necropolis. In eighteen of twenty interviews with community members questions were raised about the research that has been undertaken close to the Messembria Necropolis. The Necropolis presents a continuity from 5th century BC to 15th century AD. It was found accidentally while digging for the foundations for a public construction. Since 2008 archaeological excavations are taking place and only within the year 2010 a team of 25 archaeologists unearthed 650 finds of 950 tombs dating to various historical periods.

This cultural perception in the local community (among elders and other knowledgeable community members) is very indicative. As bearers of the local traditions, they are also most concerned about the future of the sacred sites and cultural assets of the community.

The study's ethnographic findings were summarized in two foundational principles that speak of the obligation that local communities have in caring for culturally sensitive sites and intangible culture: the principle of respect for cultural assets, especially historical religious remains and the principle of reciprocity in relationships between the living and their ancestors. This is a telling example of how these findings reveal the different foundations of the concept of cultural heritage, in both material and intangible aspects. The community's approach emphasizes people's obligation, both in the past and currently, while the state's definition focuses on responsibilities to "artefacts" – objects. Heritage safeguarding and interpreting principles derived from local communities and their traditional practices shed light on alternative ways of understanding safeguarding or cultural value.

During the research, eighteen of the respondents expressed their willingness to meet and talk with other representatives of the community: for nine individuals, there was a general willingness to discuss with the other inhabitants, six pointed to a specific group of recipients (homeowners, residents of the east/west side of the peninsula, people living in specific streets), and three people indicated by name, those they wanted to meet. Twelve people said

that the question generally asked during discussion with the representatives of the local authorities did not refer to the relevant issue. Nine people confirmed the desire to create a list of questions for the inhabitants in connection with intangible cultural heritage and its forms of commemoration.

6.2. Second study

Due to the findings of the previous study it was necessary to initiate another research based on the community-based approach.

Accordingly to the adopted methodology, the ethnographic methods used in each study will be chosen by the participants themselves. These are likely to include interviews, discussion circles (in small groups), oral histories and site visits participant observation. At the same time, there will be a possibility for communities members to conduct their own archival research.

The use of community-based local framework for the research design, goals, philosophy and outcomes, the participation of individuals that all come from the Ancient City of Nessebar will help research process to be developed as a constant dialogue, an intergenerational and dynamic 'research conversation', that truly encourages collective memory and transfers culturally appropriate knowledge as the research unfolds.

Raw data generated during the research will be compiled for the community to curate. Completed reports will go through a process of community review and approval before they can be disseminated to the public, as there are key principles of the community-based approach to dissemination of findings in respectful and understandable language.

The combined collective information, accepted by the local community can then be used to inform states' heritage management decisions from the community's standpoint. This information can be available also for use in resource and urban management decisions, as well as for the public (NGO's, academics, population of Nesseber, etc.).

This is an example which provides communities with a means to use ethnographic research to articulate their own ways of protecting and transmitting the past into the present and to place more control in the hands of those in the source over the identification, interpretation and presentation of intangible culture.

The participatory research approach to community-based principles with strong ethnographic content seems to be an appropriate way to better understand some of the complex issues that characterize intersections among property, heritage and culture.

7. Conclusion

The participatory research approach on community-based principles with strong ethnographic content seems to be an appropriate way to better understand some of the complex issues that characterize intersections among property, heritage and culture. The context-specific local negotiations based on mutual respect among different standpoints are far more appropriate and effective for working through issues related to intangible and tangible heritage

than legal state-sanctioned mechanisms which imposed definitions of cultural affiliation and culture as property (Brown, 2004; Greenfield, 2007).

Accordingly to the character of intangible cultural heritage in historic areas some principles should be mentioned. Firstly, the human-oriented principle. A historic area can be perceived as lively cultural space only if it inhabited, and the inhabitant are permanent part of it. Otherwise – a historic area is nothing more than a staged landscape, a bigger museum. Secondly – the dynamic conservation principle. As the leading feature of intangible cultural heritage is living, so the method the protection should be dynamic.

The objective of the 2003 Convention was to protect and promote local heritage, however, due to the imposed mechanisms of protection of intangible heritage, it can be used for preserving the monolithic model of cultural policy in force in a given state. An undoubtable merit of the UNESCO regulation is introducing the requirement that states take into consideration the existing interaction between societal development and cultural processes, which are a result of their members' activities (Boylan, 2006). However, entrusting the identification of the forms of intangible heritage to state institutions raises several doubts and constitutes a threat to the continuity of elements of heritage connected with communities, which are not necessarily accepted by the authorities of particular states.

The process of defining and safeguarding the intangible cultural heritage may be called "the phase of standardization" – the introduction of international criteria due to the needs of international law regulations and administration. There is a certain hierarchy in managing elements of intangible culture – it entails that the bureaucratic cooperation should be implemented in the activities of international bodies, national commissions/centers, NGO's and communities concerned. The state institutionalization made intangible culture nation-related, or even – nationalized, which means that states could be seen as the primary holders of the intangible cultural property rights. If communities are going to play a major role in safeguarding intangible culture and also is material features then a new approach is required, one that demands community empowerment.

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