

Italian ‘Intangible Communities’ Procedures, Tactics, and New Key Actors

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Abstract Heritage communities, patrimonialization processes and participation in ICH are key concepts that belong to a new landscape arisen in the wake of the 2003 UNESCO Convention. With its emphasis on participatory processes, this Convention has produced a great deal of debate and complex repercussions for local and national cultural policies. The essay will examine several Italian areas that have been affected by the UNESCO scenario in an effort to develop an initial understanding of the complex relationships between participation and ‘heritage communities’. These cases include the emergence of new intangible heritage networks and the new leading role played by historical intangible heritage holders such as confraternities, which have traditionally been an important voice in civil life and the sphere of religiously based festivities.

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1 UNESCO-scapes and Communities

Although the 2003 UNESCO Convention is still not very well known in Italy, in recent years it has been producing interesting effects at the local level, mainly due to the way public debate has taken up the notion of ICH and the success of the Representative List program.¹ Indeed, the opportunity to have one’s cultural specificity inscribed in a list and thereby consecrated in the eyes of the entire world has proved capable of mobilizing a variety of collective subjects, both new and historically rooted, driven by the need to gain political-cultural recognition. More generally, this new international legal instrument introduced two fundamental ethical and political ele-

1 See <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/convention>. The Lists program includes a complex procedure aimed at the enrolment of an element in one of the two lists, the Representative List of ICH and the List of ICH in Need of Urgent Safeguarding: <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/directives>.

ments that have since spread throughout the global imaginary. The first is the concept of ‘cultural diversity’ and human creativity understood as elements of global value (heritage) within the sphere of human rights. The second is the practice of ‘safeguarding’, which indicates collective actions aimed at ensuring the transmission of cultural diversity as a means of fostering inclusion, dialogue, and exercising democracy.²

Following the ratification of the 2003 Convention in 2007, the Lists program gave rise to new forms of activism and local-level change in Italy, which are variously involving both institutions and various groups, with the emergence of political and economic interests and new enthusiasm for CH (Broccolini 2012). It is therefore worthwhile to ask ourselves what effect the UNESCO imaginary is having on what we have come to term *heritage communities*,³ by which I mean the new form taken by existing entities who are increasingly aware of the global value of their heritage resources, but also the new subjects we might call “new heritage communities”, actors who are undergoing a process of change as yet largely unexplored. Indeed, the 2003 UNESCO Convention presents an intentionally broad idea of community and groups⁴ but referring to a sense of continuity with the past.⁵ But many of these new actors actually express new ways of thinking of themselves as collective subjects and new ways of *making community*.

2 Native Returns and ‘Communities of Tactics’

I would like to begin with Pietro Clemente’s observation that interprets the UNESCO-scape in the framework of civil society growth. In his words, “the use of increasingly popular UNESCO procedures represents a new factor of competition for social subjects who used to be marginalised by cultural choices; at the same time, however, it represents a chance to participate in an international civil society that involves more and more factors of recognition and fewer and fewer factors of conflict” (Clemente 2011).

Anthropologists tend to view the relationship between the Convention and these collective subjects in multiple different ways; they are divided

2 There is a vast literature on ICH and the 2003 UNESCO Convention. See Bortolotto 2008; Zagato 2008; Smith, Akagawa 2009; Skounti 2011; Lourdes, Amescua 2013; Mariotti 2013; Lapicciarella Zingari 2015.

3 The term HC derives from the CoE Faro Convention which, in art. 2, states that such a community “consists of people who value specific aspects of cultural heritage which they wish, within the framework of public action, to sustain and transmit to future generations”.

4 In the preparatory work leading up to the Convention, the experts tasked with developing a glossary of terms defined the community as “people who share a self-ascribed sense of connectness” (as quoted in Blake 2009, 51).

5 What Maguet refers to as “communauté originaire” (original community) (Maguet 2011, 57).

between those who see it as a new tool for emancipation and participation (through new forms of identification), and critics, who instead see it as a hegemonic instrument for commodifying cultural expressions and essentializing identities. Scholars working on these issues have summarized some of the strongest criticisms that anthropologists levelled at the Convention when it was first developed (Bortolotto 2008, 79); one of these critiques is based on the concern that the Lists risk politicizing or bureaucratizing expressive practices rather than having the positive effect of fostering participation in civil society.

In anthropological terms, this issue can be traced back to the broad, foundational debate on identity politics in the twentieth century, in which the idea of community was broken down by race, class, ethnicity, status, gender, etc. James Clifford has suggested that we take these identity politics seriously, detaching them from a purely exclusivist perspective and recognizing the constitutive role that cultural, ethnic and racial forms of identification play in contemporary politics. Following Hall, Clifford asserted the importance of this 'in-situ' positioning (the politics of identity), arguing that it is crucial in allowing people to express their agentive capacity and take action, including political action:

Communities need to make 'room' for themselves (Turner 1992, 14) in a crowded world. "If in the late twentieth century they have done this through cultural processes of ethnic, regional, tribal (etc.) identification (in tactical combination), this is not something we have the luxury, or the privilege, to lament" (Clifford 2000, 96-7).

And yet, what the new millennium mainly appears to have produced within the broad constellation of identity politics is an acceleration of 'returns' to local worlds, moves that can be read as a contemporary way of acting in the complex world of post-modernity for both indigenous communities, which hold increasingly well-defined positions in the contemporary political-cultural scene (Clifford 2013), and other forms of cultural identification. In relation to the most widely debated identity politics of the twentieth century, the notion of ICH constitutes a next-generation identity variable - a 2.0 idea - in which the local sphere is connected to a variably-configured idea of community that involves local revitalized historical formations as well as new inventions defining new collective movements, where these intersect with local, national and supranational levels in highly divergent ways.

Moreover, this global tool (the 2003 Convention) that refers to standardized international procedures (the Lists) represents a further 'double-edged' variable in the new politics of intangible heritage. This variable threatens to potentially 'reduce' cultural diversity within the structure of international standards; at the same time, it also functions as a new site of legitimacy for both old and new groups in the collective arena of *humanity*, in a plural dimension. From this point of view, both the procedures for seeking inclusion in the List, which are generating veritable communities

of *tactics* associated with intangible heritage (instead of communities of 'practice' as scholars usually find), and Clifford-style *returns* to native dimensions (Clifford 2013) are two sides of the same coin and the same positioning of groups and communities in the world of heritage.

In particular, the notion of *tactics* might prove the most useful for reading the mobile landscape in which individuals and groups maneuver within the procedural structures produced by international bodies and filtered down through the variable geometry of national policies. To borrow de Certeau's well-known distinction between strategy and tactics and frame the former as top-down institutional procedures and the second as the spaces of action subjects produce within and between the strands of global procedural webs (De Certeau 2010, 69 ff.), it becomes clear that the UNESCO scenario produces spaces of action in which subjects tactically maneuver in various ways in search of spaces, possibilities, meaning, advantages and visibility. This takes place within different forms of 'cultural intimacy' characterized by interesting and unprecedented tactical forms that play out between local entities and institutions in relation to the various procedural scenarios (that of UNESCO, at the national level, etc.). However, unlike de Certeau's consumers, in this case the primary element is achievement of the goal (being inscribed in the List?), and this generates a space of action in ways that are instrumental rather than subversive.

3 Procedures and Inventories

Has the world of UNESCO procedures for ICH ever been studied anthropologically? To begin to observe it in a way that sheds light on its relationship with 'UNESCO-directed' communities, there are multiple levels to consider: 1) the international level of procedures; 2) the national level, in which procedures are applied by the State, which entails filters, validations, adaptations and relationships with local stakeholders; and 3) the local level, in which the communities involved take action. While the first level already involves complex procedures of negotiation as part of the work that characterizes the Convention and its implementation, the second and third tiers in particular call into question the notion of 'tactics'. At the same time, however, we must keep in mind that these local articulations more frequently host a space of action that gives rise to initiatives, creative projects, new ways of relating and competing for visibility that go beyond exclusively goal-oriented effects (achieving inscription in the List).

The 'UNESCO-directed' communities are required to relate with two procedural universes. The first is the application file for obtaining inclusion in the list, the second is the inventory which, although part of the form (specifically, it is criterion R.5 of the file), tends to develop a life of its own, as I will show.

In Italy, the procedure for the ICH file, which is regulated by the Operational Guidelines,⁶ is applied by means of an additional *sub-procedure* established through an agreement between the Italian National Commission for UNESCO (CNIU) and other institutions involved in this field.⁷ This sub-procedure constitutes the Italian State's field of action and, as described on the Italian UNESCO site, involves the following steps: to begin, nomination proposals are forwarded to CNIU, which evaluates each proposal and forwards it to one of the appointed ministries MiBACT or MIPAAF; these Ministries then contact the applicant and assess the proposal within 180 days from the time the file is submitted. The second step involves the Ministry informing the CNIU of the results of its examination. The CNIU then makes a judgment of its own and communicates this judgment to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which forwards the decisions to the Italian representative of UNESCO. The Italian representative in turn forwards the file to the UNESCO Secretariat of the Convention. These convoluted dynamics are the context in which all the intricacy of the negotiations among the multiple stakeholders involved in the different phases of file presentation takes place: the bureaucratic phase of procedures, the political phase of relationships, and 'scientific' discourse. Furthermore, although according to the 'spirit' of the Convention inscription in the List should not represent an award 'bestowed' by UNESCO but rather a starting point for safeguard policies, in reality the complexity of the operations means that List inclusion is perceived as a highly competitive and therefore award-oriented process by both local people and institutions.⁸ This fact exacerbates participants' tendency to act instrumentally and tactically ('beating the competition'),⁹ but it also fosters more creative and agentive aspects in terms of relationships and practices.

The matter of the inventory issue is likewise quite complex because, as I have explained elsewhere (Broccolini 2011, 2016), Italy has a lengthy tradition of technical-scientific cataloguing of CH, including forms of ethnographic heritage (*beni demo-etno-antropologici*); in Italy, however, the

6 <http://www.unesco.org/culture/ich/en/directives>.

7 <http://www.unesco.it/it/PatrociniCandidature/Detail/206> and <http://unesco.blob.core.windows.net/pdf/UploadCKEditor/Procedura%20invio%20candidature%20nelle%20liste%20UNESCO1.pdf> (2017-12-15).

8 Indeed, local rhetoric (and local media outlets) often refers to these applications as if they were real competitions, with expressions such as: "we have to win the UNESCO prize"; "we did it"; "we made it into the final round"; "we have been defeated", "the race to UNESCO has begun...", "we have passed the feast of..." etc.

9 In the course of the Intergovernmental Committee held in Bali in 2011, due to the high number of applications submitted by the states, it was decided that each state would submit only one application per year for the Representative List. This decision has increased the level of competitiveness inside each state (Mariotti 2013, 90).

purpose of such cataloguing has historically been scientific (involving disciplinary expertise) rather than 'social' as suggested by the Convention. As a result, on the basis of the current Code (*Codice dei Beni Culturali e del Paesaggio*, 2004), cataloguing in Italy has been carried out through a procedure that does not encompass community participation as intended by the Convention; rather, it is connected exclusively to measures for protecting the heritage in question. Even when the institutions involved have introduced simplified inventorying procedures¹⁰ to facilitate applications for inscription on the List, these procedures have been perceived as challenging for individuals to use. In practice, local actors are not free to produce the inventory of their choice for the nominations; they are obliged to follow ministerial procedures that require experts be brought in. In this context, local actors have trouble understanding the purpose of the cataloguing forms. They often fail to grasp the 'social' purposes of the inventory process and instead experience it as a bureaucratic hurdle that must be overcome as quickly as possible in order to 'move the nomination along'. This field is also home to a complex constellation of negotiations, practices and 'sub-procedures' involving various central bodies who sometimes appear to be on the 'side' of local interlocutors and at other times do not.

4 Case Studies

At this point, having outlined the 2003 Convention's universe of procedures, it might be said that the Convention embodies an implicit *aporia* that can be seen in its oscillation between self-recognition by the participating subject and validation by state actors. In view of this oscillation, it makes sense to ask what effect the establishment of the Lists is having on both traditional spaces of participation and the emergence of new collective heritage actors. Can it be argued that the 2003 Convention has rendered the expressive forms related to ICH more institutional and political? There are many possibilities, ranging from greater institutional rigidity (with the creation of new offices and regulations), the emergence of new lobbying interests, including private actors (e.g. Foundations, Agencies and Consortiums) and, on the opposite end of the spectrum, new creative examples of participation.

There is also another factor to consider, namely the new relationship being created between collective subjects and a new idea of global public space triggered by UNESCO procedures (Maguet 2011, 60). Through their

10 From ICCD ministerial form (the BDI sheet) which has long been used for UNESCO nomination inventories, procedures have now adopted the simplified MODI sheet; available at http://www.iccd.beniculturali.it/index.php?it/459/micromanuali/micromanuali_533a7d77d3bc7/16.

engagement with the Convention, social subjects are required to step out onto a global public stage.¹¹ It has been argued that this process involves groups devoid of political status or economic power (Maguet 2011, 49), but more often this emergence seems to foster the political dynamism and formation of pro-UNESCO list interest groups or ‘communities of tactics’, with the 2003 Convention used as a tool to promote spheres of interest and power that go beyond its apparent goal. In the short term, it is hard to discern how positive or negative this might be; some cases exemplify a model of pluralism involving many local voices while others instead suggest an instrumental or self-serving use of the concept of ICH.

Anthropology can move beyond unconditionally critical or generically enthusiastic positions and instead contribute to a critical reading of these processes and ‘tactical’ forms through the fundamental role of critical ethnography, which can aid us in interpreting local cases and processes that would otherwise be represented one-dimensionally by local or institutional actors. By now, there are a good number of cases involved in UNESCO nomination processes in Italy, but very few ethnographic investigations.¹² These cases are extremely heterogeneous and it is only through an ethnographic gaze that they can be understood in their complexity; nonetheless, these cases can help us, even temporarily and partially, to gain an initial overview of the different forms of activism emerging in local pro-UNESCO politics and their different interpretations of the notion of community.

At first glance, the two main variables that impact collective subjects seem to be, firstly, the *top-down* or *bottom-up* nature of applications and, secondly, their local dimension, with a difference between applications exclusively focused on specific local ‘elements’ and network nominations involving multiple different areas, with the areal factor (nominations covering an even larger geographical area) still in an experimental phase.

The variety and, at times, creativity that fuels these applications suggests that the notion of ICH increasingly transcends the ‘demo-ethno-anthropological’ field of so-called ‘traditions’; rather, for good or ill, this notion is extending to encompass extremely broad visions, some of which are interesting in terms of their social and imaginative repercussions, others of which are motivated by purely economic interests.

¹¹ Provided, however, that they not enter into competition with local state bodies and that they ensure the ‘domestication’ of the elements, which must not contradict supposedly universal principles and the aesthetic sensibilities of the global public (Maguet 2011, 66, 68).

¹² In terms of ethnographic investigation, the work Palumbo carried out on eastern Sicily in relation to WH was seminal from the 90s to 2000 (2002, 2003, 2006).

5 Alone or Together: Forms of Exclusivity and Pro-UNESCO Networks

Within the UNESCO nominations the notion of *community* seems to be taking on a wholly institutional and political character. In most cases, local institutions are the ones to launch the application, and they are then joined by other collective subjects; in other cases, autonomous 'scientific committee' are supported by institutions; in yet other cases, historically entrenched collective actors such as confraternities or pre-existing local committees act to bring in institutions and scholars. Another interesting development is the way consortia and associations originally created to promote commercial products sometimes 're-orient' themselves to focus on UNESCO recognition.

Of the approximately 40 Representative List nominations submitted to the CNIU in recent years,¹³ the most successful Italian ones at the local level have been single applications for specific local elements, especially festive events, which have involved decisive action by their respective municipal institutions as well as the mobilization of old and new forms of community. These include several religious feasts: the Fracchie of San Marco in Lamis (the sacred fires lit in the province of Foggia for Good Friday),¹⁴ the feast of San Eufisio in Cagliari,¹⁵ the Misteri of Campobasso for Corpus Domini, the Luminaria in Pisa¹⁶ and the Ardia of San Costantino.¹⁷ However, to date none of these has been selected by the Italian govern-

13 This data are hypothetical rather than official, as neither the CNIU nor the two ministries in conjunction (MiBACT and MIPAAF) have provided precise data regarding the nominations. See Mariotti 2013.

14 The Fracchie application was prepared by two scholars, Gabriele Tardio, a local historian from Gargano, and the architect Nicola Maria Spagnoli, an official at MiBACT, and supported by the Province of Foggia and Region of Apulia with a more controversial contribution from the city, as well. Over time, this application has engaged with an international network of similar practices related to sacred fires, and recently it gave rise to an association whose aims include the promotion of the candidacy.

15 The applications for the Scioglimento del Voto rite and the feast of St. Eufisio were intensely promoted by the Municipality of Cagliari with the involvement of 4 other municipalities involved in the pilgrimage as well as the Archdiocese and the archconfraternity Gonfalone della Madonna del Riscatto.

16 The nominations of the Luminaria of Pisa and Misteri of Campobasso likewise enjoyed strong support from the municipalities of Pisa and Campobasso respectively; in the latter case, the application also involved assistance from the University of Molise and the anthropologist Letizia Bindi.

17 The horseback procession in honour of the Roman emperor Constantine in Sedilo, Sardinia. This case also involves an initiative by the City of Sedilo in the province of Oristano, with the establishment of a scientific committee made up of former officials from local agencies and universities as well as scholars.

ment for submission to the UNESCO Convention Secretariat. Historical re-enactments, often associated with religious figures and events, have also enjoyed some success in the UNESCO imaginary and several have been nominated, including the Perdonanza in L'Aquila,¹⁸ the Parata dei Turchi in honour of San Gerardo, the Giostra del Saracino in Arezzo, Calendimaggio in Assisi, and the Giostra della Quintana in Foligno.¹⁹ The Palio of Siena is a case all its own, having been embroiled in conflicts stemming from opposition by animal rights groups that ended with the application being withdrawn (Broccolini 2011, 2015). About carnivals instead, so far, only the Viareggio Carnival presented a nomination, sponsored by its dedicated Foundation and local town council.

Other lesser-known projects are surprising in terms of their interpretive ability and the economic implications associated with the commercial promotion of their products. These include the intangible heritage nomination of the historical families of the Medici Grand Duke Aristocracy, promoted by the Civic Order of the de' Medici and Prince Don Ottaviano de' Medici of Tuscany;²⁰ the candidacy of Torre del Greco coral artefacts and cameos promoted by Assocoral (the national association of coral producers and traders); and the cultural activities of Salerno's Scuola Medica Salernitana, sponsored by the City of Salerno together with a group of scholars appointed by the city. Most of these applications are still in their infancy, but some are already in the preparatory stage while the three elements already in-

18 The application of the Perdonanza celestiniana from L'Aquila was promoted in 2010 in the aftermath of the severe earthquake that struck the city. It was initiated by the Abruzzi Deputation of National History (Deputazione di Storia Patria negli Abruzzi) and carried forward by a committee chaired by Francesco Sabatini, honorary president of the Accademia della Crusca. In the course of the 2015 Intergovernmental Committee of UNESCO, where it had been submitted, the application was postponed due to some missing elements in the compilation of the file. The internet is full of news about the controversy triggered by this 'rejection'; e.g. <http://news-town.it/cronaca/10418-perdonanza-patrimonio-unesco,-ecco-perch%C3%A9-la-candidatura-%C3%A8-stata-bocciata.html>.

19 In Italy, historical re-enactments have been intensely re-invented and patrimonialized over the years by local institutions, and these practices often have specific bodies with dedicated scientific committees (Dei 2017). In fact, all of these cases involve candidacies promoted by municipalities with the involvement of specially appointed organizations and scientific committees. The *Parata dei Turchi* application was sponsored by the City of Poppenza with the support of a Scientific and Technical Committee set up in 2011 just before the application was submitted, together with the Italian Geographic Society. The Giostra del Saracino application was sponsored by the city of Arezzo with the involvement of the 4 districts involved in the Giostra, whereas in the case of the Calendimaggio of Assisi, the application was supported by the Municipality of Assisi together with the Calendimaggio Organization. For the Giostra della Quintana of Foligno, the candidacy was initiated by the City and the Giostra Organization, with its scientific committee.

20 For more information, see <http://www.de-medici.com/la-storia-della-dinastia-medicea-e-della-toscana-rinascimentale-sono-patrimonio-culturale-immateriale-dellumanita> (2017-12-15).

scribed in the List have each had their own trajectories. The inclusion of the Sicilian Opera dei Pupi, the first Italian intangible element to be submitted to UNESCO, resulted from the work of the Antonio Pasqualino International Puppet Museum in Palermo (Museo Internazionale delle Marionette),²¹ the sole proponent of the nomination; the Canto a Tenore of Sardinian pastoralism achieved inclusion thanks not only to its cultural value but also to the decisive intervention of the Province of Nuoro, while in the case of the Traditional Violin Craftsmanship in Cremona, the nomination was actively promoted by the Antonio Stradivari Violin Makers consortium and the Italian Luthiery Association, with support from the City of Cremona.

Against the current of locally-focused initiatives, there are some 'areal' applications that appear to favour cooperation across entire areas; in these cases, however, UNESCO is sometimes 'used' as a tool of commercial promotion. For example, the nomination of Chianti Classico is promoted by the Chianti Classico Consortium; the Ligurian *pesto* application is promoted by the City of Genoa Chamber of Commerce in the Liguria Region and by Palatifini (a food and wine association); there is also the candidacy of the Fascia Olivicola (The Olive-growing area) between Assisi and Spoleto involving the Umbria Region and the Villa Fabri Foundation from Treviso and, lastly, the recent cross-border initiative to list the Alpine Diet, promoted by the Lombardy Region and Valposchiavo in Switzerland. Other examples of area applications have also been proposed in recent years that do not contain a commercial element; specifically the work of the Madonnari in Lombardy, promoted by the municipality of Curtatone in Mantua; the *Comunità Alpina del Trentino* (Alpine Choral arts of Trentino), a regional area application presented by the Trentino Choir Federation with the support of several choir group presidents, and *Musica e Danza in Val Resia* (the Music and Dance heritage of Val Resia), a valley in the province of Udine that has retained a Slavic cultural and language. This last nomination has been promoted by the municipality of Resia and supported by the Friuli region.

The trend of creating networks among actors spread across multiple territories represents a quite different phenomenon, however. Rather than being developed from the bottom-up through 'dialogue among people', these networks often appear to derive from strategic efforts of promotion. Several new groupings have formed thanks to a boost from above, such as the Mediterranean Diet, a transnational network application that has received powerful ministerial backing in Italy²² and been framed as a

21 Both the Sicilian Opera dei Pupi and Sardinian Canto a Tenore were proclaimed in 2001 and 2005 in the *Masterpieces of the Oral and Intangible Heritage* program, and only later inscribed in the Representative List. For an exploration of the effects of such proclamations on local areas, see Bortolotto 2008.

22 The nomination of the Mediterranean Diet involved four countries bordering the Mediterranean: Italy, Spain, Greece and Morocco, recently extended to also include Portugal,

medical-nutritional issue. In this case, the model of community employed is that of the scientific community, while local area practices and forms have received little attention. It is hard to make out the role played by local *heritage 'bearers'* or everyday consumption practices in this application, but it might nonetheless produce interesting effects. Indeed, in southern Italy the listing of the Diet in 2010 has begun to produce new scientific-nutritionist collective forms, such as associations, academies, movements, foundations etc.²³

The networks being created among municipalities, established ad hoc for the purposes of drafting UNESCO applications, have somewhat similar connotations but to a different degree. For instance, the Rete delle Grandi Macchine a spalla italiane (Network of Celebrations of big shoulder-borne processional structures) was formed especially to apply for recognition and, in 2013, it achieved the inclusion of the four feasts of Viterbo, Nola, Palmi and Sassari; many saw this as a virtuous model of networking and dialogue between communities. Before the UNESCO era, these communities had little to do with each other but, thanks to a third subject created ad hoc for the application, they have now begun to develop new neighbourly relations between groups of heritage-bearers; this process will need to be monitored over time, given that the current field of local policies is characterized by heated competition among municipalities as well as a serious risk that expressive cultural forms might be rendered more fixed and rigid.²⁴

A second type of cases involve networks established before UNESCO as economic interest groups that have since come to view UNESCO nomination as an opportunity to promote their products. An example of this is the truffle culture nomination pursued since 2011 by a national association, the Associazione Città del Tartufo (Truffle Cities Association). This is a powerful initiative made up of approximately 50 actors including municipalities and other local authorities spread across 11 regions; it also has a specific organisational structure, with a steering committee of mayors, and is supported by testimonials from prominent entertainment and political figures.²⁵ In the wake of Turkish coffee's listing, Espresso Italian coffee has

Croatia and Cyprus. The application has been proposed for Italy by the Ministry of Agriculture intercepting a request from Spain (Scepi, Petrillo 2012; see Broccolini 2012b).

23 For example <http://www.associazionedietaediterranea.it> (from Pioppi); <http://www.fondazioneediterranea.it> (in Ostuni); <http://www.dietamediterraneanicontera.it> (in Nicotera); <http://www.movimentodietamediterranea.it> (in Cosenza). See also Broccolini 2011, 45; 2015, 185-186; Moro 2015; Scepi, Petrillo 2012.

24 Giving rise to foundations, for instance, as in the case of Gigli Foundation in Nola (Ballacchino 2012).

25 See for instance <http://www.massimodalema.it/doc/19051/tartufo-patrimonio-unesco-dalema-sosterro-candidatura.htm>.

also applied for inclusion. This application, promoted by the National Italian Espresso Institute and the Consortium for Protecting Traditional Italian Espresso Coffee, definitely appears to be an example of cultural promotion in the interests of an economic-commercial 'product'. The network project *Europassione per l'Italia*, in contrast, was developed by a cultural association with the aim of networking the communities that engage in rituals associated with the Holy Representation and Death of Christ. Since 2012 this association has been pursuing UNESCO List inclusion for the 35 local collective actors involved in the network.

There are other interesting and surprising proposals we might examine, as well, such as the candidacy of Women's Intangible Labor (*Lavoro Immateriale delle donne*) promoted by the *Stati Generali delle Donne* and *Enterprising Girls*, a thought-provoking 'gendered' example in which the idea of ICH is extended to include a highly significant economic-labor issue. The final example I wanted to mention is evocative rather than associated with specific 'element' or collective subjects: in Western Sicily, some high school students have proposed the transnational nomination of the *Rotta dei Fenici* (Route of the Phoenicians) as a site of dialogue between the two shores of the Mediterranean.

On the other hand, some historical 'bearers' of intangible heritage have begun to play a more central and public role, although much less institutional or economic-commercial than the previous network applications. These 'networks' from below include the Italian Lace (*Merletto italiano*) nomination, which brings together 16 lace-making communities led by the community of Bolsena (Lazio). In addition, it is worth noting the role played by confraternities, who have come to represent a significant presence in political and civic life in many local areas. For instance, the association SIMBDEA²⁶ is carrying out interesting work in Mussomeli, a village in the province of Caltanissetta in central Sicily that is known for an important form of confraternal polyphonic singing.²⁷ In this case, the *historical heritage communities* themselves developed a desire to dialogue with the world of scholars and make their 'debut' on the public stage of UNESCO recognition.²⁸ Though still in its initial stages, this process is already giving rise to new and unprecedented networks, in this case activated directly by

26 SIMBDEA is a professional association of demo-ethno-anthropologists who deal with ethnographic museums and ICH (<https://www.facebook.com/simbdea/?fref=nf>).

27 These songs, called 'laments', are performed by five confraternities in association with the Holy Week rites. This form of singing was registered with the REIS, (*Registro delle Eredità Immateriali della Sicilia*) in 2014.

28 See for instance *Il Patrimonio Culturale Immateriale: una risorsa per la Comunità*, organized by the archconfraternity SS. Sacramento della Madrice di Mussomeli in October of 2014. Pietro Clemente, Katia Ballacchino and I participated in this event on behalf of SIMBDEA.

the players themselves (over the past few months, a European network has been developed bringing together actors who practice traditional forms of polyphonic singing in the Mediterranean area), thereby providing a clear example of the newly leading role played by traditional subjects. This is a bottom-up process that is deeply rooted in the local political and cultural scene. As a last example, there is an application that is thematic and detached from specific local areas rather than networked, specifically the nomination of Opera Lirica, developed by the Cantori Professionisti d'Italia Association, subjects who are directly involved in the preservation of Opera singing.²⁹

6 The Last who Shall Remain the Last

In this scenario that has become increasingly articulated and complex over the years, I would like to conclude by considering the last category of actors, specifically marginal groups who speak neither English nor French and have not had their heritage visibility legitimized by anthropological research; groups that do not have agencies, foundations, consortia or academies scholars to support them and do not enjoy enough political-cultural or economic weight to make their weak voices heard in the public sphere. These groups do not attract the heritage-related imaginations of groups and institutions to their local areas and sometimes have not even collectively developed a consciousness of their heritage documented and translated into written knowledge. Consequently, their practices, which are actually highly interesting and 'valuable' (for whom?), slowly disappear, swallowed up by broader transformations. These are fragile cultural expressions, which suggests that the Convention might actually have originally been designed specifically for them; in the 'race' to achieve UNESCO recognition, however, they will probably never have the power to take their place in an increasingly crowded public scene made up of subjects stronger than they are who join forces to prepare plans and 'tactics' higher and higher up the institutional or political ladder. In this scenario, we should consider the power of resilience displayed by actors who hang onto a sphere of autonomy and powerful cultural creativity that escapes *patrimonialization* but which, in hindsight, might actually have been the main motivation for safeguarding. As this example illustrates, it is becoming ever clearer that UNESCO intangible heritage at the local level represents a new framework for twenty-first century political action, a framework that is broad and inclusive enough to encompass both old and new forms of aggregation we might label communities in keeping with today's UNESCO terminology.

29 <http://www.cantoriproitalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/0pera-Unesco.pdf>.

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