

**“WELL ... IF THE PROFESSOR TOLD YOU SO ... WHO AM I TO  
DISAGREE?”. THE IMPACT OF ACADEMIA ON COMMUNITY  
KNOWLEDGE AND A STRATEGY FROM THE ARCHIVE**

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„ПА ... АКО ТИ ЈЕ ПРОФЕСОР ТАКО РЕКАО ...  
КО САМ ЈА ДА СЕ НЕ СЛОЖИМ?“

УТИЦАЈ АКАДЕМСКОГ СВЕТА НА ЗНАЊЕ ЗАЈЕДНИЦЕ  
И ЈЕДНА СТРАТЕГИЈА ИЗ АРХИВА

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**ABSTRACT**

The impact of academia on cultural heritage is yet to be scrutinised. The intangible cultural heritage (ICH) constitutes a particularly fragile domain because it is so open to the influence of researchers and bodies of reputation, such as the experts hired for the production of a diplomatic file such as the UNESCO candidacy. In the beginning of the article I offer the institutional overview of ICH and its Portuguese subsidiary. In the second part of the article I detail the European project *HeritaMus* and its underlying conceptual framework, which was designed to document ICH and tangible cultural assets, creating a simple tool for cooperative curation involving members of the *fado* community.

**KEYWORDS:** cooperative curation, sound archives, intangible cultural heritage, *fado*.

**АПСТРАКТ**

Утицај академске заједнице на културно наслеђе тек би требало да буде предмет научног истраживања. Нематеријално културно наслеђе (НКН)

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посебно је крхка област, будући да је подложна утицајима који долазе од истраживача и угледних органа као што су стручњаци ангажовани на продукцији дипломатских досијеа попут кандидатуре за Унеско. На самом почетку чланка излажем институционални преглед НКН и његове португалске подружнице. У другом делу текста представљам европски пројекат *HeritaMus* и његове концептуалне оквире, који су настали како би се документовали НКН и материјална културна добра, стварајући једноставно оруђе за кооперативно кустовство које укључује и чланове фадо-заједнице.

КЉУЧНЕ РЕЧИ: кооперативно кустовство, звучни архиви, нематеријално културно наслеђе, фадо.

## INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE IN 2022

The twentieth century will be remembered as the time when heritage was invented;<sup>2</sup> but, in its last quarter, some countries and communities felt uneasy with the prevailing notion of heritage that praised material, Western, high-brow, cultivated, academic, *extra-ordinary* (the hyphen is the focal point here) assets, with exceptional worldwide value and meaning, as well as monumental and Artistic objects with capital “A”. All non-canonical cultural items, from sound recordings of popular songs to traditional knowledge, were left out of the dominant understanding of “heritage”. The uneasiness was strongly felt among non-western countries and throughout the Global South, sacrificed to soaring cultural-economical globalisation.

Promoted by countries such as Japan, Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) was intended to be a sound solution to recognise the heritage status of cultural assets left out of the canonical framework of cultivated Culture and Arts (both with capital letters), enlarging the scope of classifications, typologies, and things to be safeguarded. The new concept was clearly intended to enhance practices and skills, festivities and rituals, traditionally shared and orally transmitted knowledge. The concept was a call for mutual understanding of different communities on a symmetrical standing, promoting the values and principles of UNESCO’s *Universal Declaration on Human Rights* (1948), the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights* (1966), and the dialogue across communities, cultures, nations, regions, religions, ways of life, in an intercultural dialogue among equals.

After thirty years of intense debates (commented in strong terms by Munjeri 2004, reported by Smith and Akagawa 2009 and Aikawa-Faure 2009a), the concept was stabilised in the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage* (UNESCO 2003).<sup>3</sup> The purposes of the Convention are stated in its first article: to

2 As well as tourism, but that’s another story, albeit an articulated one.

3 As Müller analysed, the narratives that determine politics “are often produced, without a master

safeguard heritage, ensure respect, raise awareness, and create an instrument for international cooperation and assistance, valuing heritage and communities. The definition of ICH is unequivocally elaborated in the second article of the *Convention*. It includes practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, as well as the tangible assets associated with the proposed element,<sup>4</sup> that communities recognise as a central and decisive element for their identity. Transmitted from generation to generation, the ICH element has to be a lived one, constantly recreated by communities in response to their natural, social and cultural contexts, providing a dynamic sense of identity and continuity. In short, ICH has to be a representative<sup>5</sup> living tradition.<sup>6</sup>

The Representative list of ICH is one of the three major instruments established by the *Convention*. It is mandatory that each enlisting process includes a safeguarding plan that involves a mobilised representative community of practice in a bottom-up approach, triggered by the community itself, on their own terms, making sure and demonstrating the involvement and mobilisation of the community in all phases.<sup>7</sup>

In 2021, a second evaluation of the UNESCO action in the domain of the *Convention* took place. The major findings were:

1. the *Convention* “matured” (UNESCO 2021, v) up until it became “a victim of its own success”, being unable to adequately respond to all requests;<sup>8</sup>
2. it became a priority to strengthen capacity building and policy guidance, in particular among African Nations, which had a positive impact;
3. certain regions are still underrepresented and have a chronic lack of training finding hard to elaborate proposals;
4. UNESCO has acknowledged that “considerable amounts of knowledge [were] generated around the *Convention*” (UNESCO 2021: III, VI, 46);
5. UNESCO has also acknowledged criticism raised by government officials, NGOs, academia, and communities in this matter.

plan, from an existing repertoire created in preceding sessions and meetings” (Müller 2013, 8). Such debates are meant to tame the draft until it becomes polite, politically speaking. When the gap between tangible and intangible heritage was bridged, Munjeri (2004) called it a Revolution (p. 17), the Rubicon (p. 18) and compared it to the fall of the Bastille in terms of heritage politics.

4 Tangible assets that result from, or are used at the ICH element under consideration.

5 The community involved has to recognise the practice as being identity significant and the ground to a sense of belonging.

6 It is an inherited and transmitted tradition with its own dynamic, not a folkloristic process of recreation or reconstitution.

7 There are cases in which this does not happen: see Sandroni (2011) on the *samba de roda* case as an example of a top-down process.

8 It took only fifteen years for it to reach almost universal adoption. “The national and multinational proposals to the listing, the requests for international assistance, the calls for meetings and capacity building programs, keep growing up to the point the Secretariat recognizes to be unable to adequately respond to all the requests” (UNESCO 2021, vi).

The political constraints, the burden of tourism, the pressure to monetise ICH status recognition, the intellectual property issues and the perversion of concepts and values (namely the notions of heritage and culture) are putting significant pressure on the classification processes. This problematic context is acknowledged by the communities and, above all, by the researchers, some of them also involved in the production of candidacies.<sup>9</sup> Folkloristic strategies and the crystallisation of practices have been identified, showing unequivocal signs that some ICH elements have been performed specifically to meet what agents think are the expectations of UNESCO.

With regard to Portugal, the ICH is under the tutelage of the Directorate General for Cultural Heritage (DGPC, in Portuguese) of the Ministry of Culture, through its Division of Immobile, Mobile and Intangible Heritage of the Department of Cultural Assets, whose mission, legally established,<sup>10</sup> is to enforce the obligations assumed by the Portuguese State at the time of the ratification of the convention, namely the legal protection (Article 2, paragraph 2, subparagraph b of Decree-Law 115/2012, of 25 May) and the creation of procedures to safeguard this heritage, starting with its registration in the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage. At the same time, the DGPC is also responsible for articulating with third-party entities, whether public or private, providing technical support in the documentation and safeguarding ICH elements and their associated assets, promoting studies in this field. The national network of entities related to ICH includes five UNESCO consulting NGOs<sup>11</sup> and a UNESCO chair at University of Évora in Intangible Heritage and Traditional Know-How.

Since 2011, seven elements<sup>12</sup> have been registered on UNESCO's representative list and two others on the urgent list.<sup>13</sup> Two of these proposals were recognized by UNESCO as reference dossiers (Fado and Polyphonic singing from Alentejo). Only two of the inscriptions are transnational<sup>14</sup> and, in both cases, the inclusion of Portugal occurred after UNESCO registered the elements in its representative list.

Thanks to the huge public impact of the inscription of Fado (2011) and Polyphonic singing from Alentejo (2014), the first two candidates for enlisting at the representative list, during the last decade we have witnessed numerous successive

9 There is an enormous amount of academic reflection on those topics, but Kirshenblatt-Gimblet (1998) should be highlighted. See also Seitel 2001, Hafstein 2004, Blake 2006, Smith and Akagawa 2009, Aikawa-Faure 2009a, for cultural politics and institutional processes and debates. From the academic point of view see Baron 2010, Harvey 2001, Bertolotto 2011, and on the overlapping of those two approaches see Early and Seitel 2002.

10 Decree-Law 139/2009 of 15 June, updated by Decree-Law 149/2015 of 4 August and Decree-Law 115/2012 of 25 May.

11 *Fundação INATEL*, the research center *CRIA*, *Federação Portuguesa de Folclore*, *Memória Imaterial Cooperativa Cultural CRL*, and International Association of Paremiology – IAP.

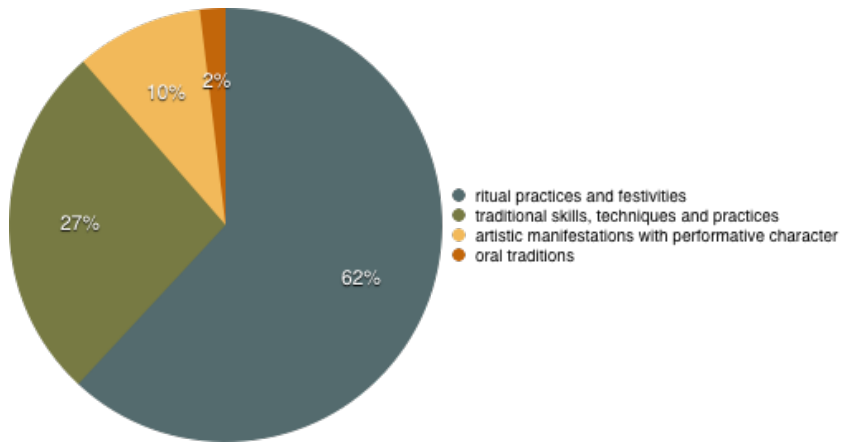
12 Fado (2011), Mediterranean diet (2013), polyphonic singing from Alentejo (2014), craftsmanship of Extremoz clay figurines (2017), winter festivities in Podence (2019), falconry (2021) and community festivities in Campo Maior (2021).

13 Manufacture of cowbells (2015), Bisalhães black pottery manufacturing process (2016).

14 Mediterranean diet and falconry.

and constant announcements of other candidacies. More than a hundred candidacies are currently in preparation, with different degrees of maturity and different levels of sophistication, yet almost always seeking to obtain some of the visibility gained by the early classifications, making use of this kind of celebratory logic as a strategy to obtain economic advantages through tourism. All this "excitement" surrounding the ICH led the DGPC to consider of utmost importance the production of methodological tools for the preparation of good and strong candidacies and for the adequate documentation of the proposed practices. For that purpose, theoretical monographs on ICH (AA.VV. 2009, AA.VV. 2013) and pedagogical material (a "collector kit" and a paper, see Costa 2014) were published. Since the publication of the Law on Cultural Heritage (DL 107/2001, of 8 September) which determines the registration to be mandatory for effective legal protection of any cultural practice (DL 139/2009, of 15 June, updated by DL 149/2015, of 4 August), the public interface of the *National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage* is the *MatrizPCI* website and database.<sup>15</sup> The inclusion of the manifestation in the *National Inventory* is conditional to any eventual candidacy to any of the UNESCO lists.

Of the 105 manifestations (or "elements" in UNESCO terms) already inventoried in *MatrizPCI* database, fifteen are already officially published (at the official State journal *Diário da República*) and half of them correspond to ritual practices and festivities. There are no inscriptions of "knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe", echoing a worldwide problem. Only seven inventoried manifestations are exclusively musical or correspond to manifestations where music and musical practices have a central role.



**Figure 1.** The graph on the typologies of manifestations inventoried at MatrizPCI, of which, some are still waiting for official publication at *Diário da República*.

15 Available at <http://www.matrizpci.dgpc.pt/MatrizPCI.Web/pt-PT/Pages/Home> (accessed 20 November 2022). The database gives access to the files of each proposal and allows the monitoring of the entire procedure and its public consultation. Public participation is welcomed.

Although the aforementioned legislation recognises the involvement of representative communities as a *sine qua non* condition of any proposal, in practice, the processes are, almost always, promoted by governing entities (local, particularly at the municipal level) that seek *a posteriori* involvement of communities, even if the inventory answers the desire for visibility and celebration of the people and communities involved. Communities are yearning for an eventual economic advantage or the perspective of social development based on the prominence obtained from heritage recognition.

### FADO AS INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

As previously mentioned, Fado was the first Portuguese manifestation candidate to UNESCO representative list. Announced in 2005, the work was carried out at *Museu do Fado* (Fado Museum)<sup>16</sup> for five years, until 2011, the year of submission and enlisting. The planned safeguard work has been carried on ever since.

The *Museu do Fado* opened in 1998, first as *House of Guitarra Portuguesa and Fado*, then *House of Fado and Guitarra Portuguesa*, until the adoption of Fado Museum name. Those changes resulted from the iteration with the Fado community of practice, reticent to be represented as a museological piece, exhibited in sanitised glass showcases, arguing that fado was a “living practice” not a museum artefact.<sup>17</sup> Working closely with the community, the museum team managed to overcome the community’ doubts and established itself as a living space and dynamic heritage institution. Nowadays, it is common to hear community members presenting the museum as “their living room”.

The Museum holds collections of sound recordings, iconography, musical instruments and other artifacts related to fado and fado performers, mostly donated by the community members, that are presented in both permanent and temporary exhibitions. The Museum also has a “Fado school”, a workshop for instrument making that mobilises community members as trainers, and a documentation center. Since its opening, the museum has run a regular program of concerts, talks, books and recordings releases, among many other activities.

Even though the Museum and the fado community had already been established entities in the cultural and heritage scene of the city and the country, the UNESCO inscription had an immense impact on the museum and its community. After the inscription, all the traces of suspicion about the process and the UNESCO list were soon erased, as the fado community understood the argument underlying the candidacy.

16 The *Museu do Fado* is a municipal museum of the municipal company for cultural venues management and cultural programing (EGEAC-em) of the Lisbon City Council.

17 This early position of the community echoes Amselle’s (2004) “fixation muséalisatrice”, Nas’s (2002) cultural normalization of showcases, or Kirshenblatt-Guimblett’s (2004) “heritage objectivation”.

In the submitted documentation, Fado was described as a performative genre incorporating music and poetry, that originally developed in Lisbon as a result of multicultural synthesis involving Afro-Brazilian sung dances that arrived to Europe, musical traditions from Portuguese rural areas brought by internal migrants, and cosmopolitan urban popular songs.<sup>18</sup> Thanks to radio and the publication of sound recordings, fado became a popular music genre throughout the country, up until the point it was acknowledged by Portuguese communities scattered around the world as "a living symbol of the city's [Lisboa] and the Portuguese cultural identity as a whole" (citation from Fado candidacy file). The object of the application was so comprehensive and inclusive that even the recent (last thirty years) association with the international "world music" circuit was mentioned. The comprehensiveness of the object definition was taken as a strategy to rule out any attempt of crystallization once enlisted, as well as the risk of establishing any kind of certificate of authenticity that would transform the dynamics of Fado as living practice into a folkloristic staging of it.

It would be unrealistic and undesirable to establish for Fado a canon of "authenticity" which would not correspond to any specific stage of its continuous process of internal change in history and which would be seen as an artificial norm hindering the natural flow of innovation and creativity in any living artistic genre, as defined by the communities that practice it. But the preservation of Fado's historical heritage, which in many cases is currently at risk, is undoubtedly an urgent task and an important component of the effort to assure the continuity and reinforcement of its practice, not as a mere historical record but as a permanent source of awareness of the genre's intrinsic nature, of its ability to reflect Portuguese cultural identity as a whole and of inspiration for new creative approaches to the genre (citation from the candidacy file).<sup>19</sup>

Nowhere, in any document, there was a reference to fado as "national song", neither "Lisboa song". Also, in the candidacy documentation, the fado community was considered as extensive as possible, including singers and composers, poets and instrument makers, sound recordings and performance venues, both professional and amateur, touristic oriented and grass-rooted, from big international stages to small informal venues like community centers and cultural associations.

The entire process was conceived and developed with the active support and participation of the fado communities. In order to ensure their involvement in the definition and implementation of the safeguarding measures proposed, a wide range of workshops, meetings, and debates took place at *Museu do Fado*. The candidacy established the *Museu do Fado* as the reference entity, responsible for the imple-

18 About Fado, as an urban song and musical genre, see AAVV 1994, Castelo-Branco 1994, Castelo-Branco e Moreno 2018, or Nery 2004.

19 See <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/fado-urban-popular-song-of-portugal-00563>, accessed 12 September 2022.



mentation of the safeguard program in close articulation with the community. The safeguard plan carried by *Museu do Fado* included the creation of the first Portuguese digital sound archive; an integrated database of documentary sources of all kinds, concerning Fado, under the custody of various third-party public and private institutions (libraries, archives, museums, associations, private collections, etc.); the implementation of a multilevel educational program; fieldwork among various fado communities; and the publication of books and sound recordings.

The historical sound recordings collection and its associated digital repository were assumed as strategic for the safeguarding, study, research, and fruition of fado; and the database currently lists more than 15.000 references. The Digital Sound Archive was the first online resource with full access to digitised historical sound recordings from the beginning of the twentieth century until circa 1960. Alongside, research was carried out on sound archiving (metadata, archival management, digital processing, content transfer, a.o.) and acoustic research on the sound recorded in historical carriers. All the research projects mobilised a multidisciplinary team with diverse backgrounds, from history and anthropology to ethnomusicology and acoustics. The research projects, carried since 2005, strongly involved community members at their core, people who helped in the identification of sources, actors, significant repertory and performance practice elements, providing a layer of “local knowledge” usually forgotten in abstract academic narratives. All that information was incorporated into the Museum collection and, later on, used by the *HeritaMus* project of which *Museu do Fado* was an Associated Partner.

### HERITAMUS FRAMEWORK

Before assuming the coordination of the installation team of the National Sound Archive of Portugal, I was part of the research team that drew up the Fado proposal for UNESCO's ICH representative list. From 2005 until 2012 I was responsible for conducting fieldwork and discographic research. Ever since Fado was enlisted in November 2011 and up until 2018, I coordinated and carried out the digitisation program of course-grooved discs held by *Museu do Fado*. By 2018, more than 4.000 items, published between 1904 and 1960, were fully available online. Only very few of those recordings had been heard by the community, even the recordings that they knew existed and were referred to in historical reference books, monographs and papers.

Alongside the archival work, the contact with fado practitioners helped me to better document each recorded song. The musicians listened to and commented on each of the recordings, identifying and naming the traditional melodies used in the recordings and signaling the performative specificities of each musician.

The multiplicity of naming strategies happens because of fado musical practices and repertoire creation processes. Fado repertoire can be organised according to three typologies: first, there are “fados de estilo” corresponding to three minimal motivic types of musical accompaniment (“fado Corrido”, “fado Menor” and “fado Mouraria”) upon which the musicians create the melody; secondly, “fados tradicio-



nais", a set of more than three hundred melodies that the fado community of practice knows and/or recognises and can use as musical support for any poem, as long as the metric structure of the poem fits the melodic phrase of the fado; and lastly, "fados-canção", a popular song where each lyric has its own specific melody. When choosing a "fado de estilo" or a "fado tradicional", the most appreciated performers are expected to create a new melody based on (but never limited to) the traditional one, creating a recognisable but different musical accompaniment. My ethnographic and discographic work focused precisely on those two first typologies: "fados de estilo" and "fados tradicionais".

In the context of a performance, the singer asks the guitarist to play a certain melody calling it by the name he or she uses to call it, and, if needed, indicating in which key he/she wants it to be played. Sometimes the guitarist does not know which melody the singer is referring to, because he or she calls it by another name. Both can call it differently, using the title of the lyric of the most known performance, its first line, or, eventually, the name of the "tradicional" melody. For a number of reasons, sometimes it is not immediately clear which "fado tradicional" the singer expects the guitarist to play and vice-versa, and it is not rare that one of them has to hum the melody.

For instance, the "*fado* [melody] *tradicional*" known as "Fado da Meia-Noite", composed by Filipe Pinto in the early 1930s, was recorded by Amália under the title "Libertação" (1954, Columbia CP2018); in 1962 it was recorded by Pinto himself as "Desespero" (2015, Edições Valentim de Carvalho 0355-2); four decades later Camané sung that melody under the title "Escada sem Corrimão" (2000, EMI 5250012); and a couple of years later, Aldina Duarte recorded it as "Deste-me tudo o que tinhas" (2006, EMI 534872). Another example: "Fado Bacalhau", composed and recorded by José António da Silva "Bacalhau" as "Fado Bacalhau" (c. 1945, Odeon Od.136.208), was sung and recorded by many fado singers under different titles: "A mulher que já foi tua" and "As Penas" (Amália Rodrigues, 2014, Edições Valentim de Carvalho 0349-2; 1945, Continental 1.005), "Amor de mãe" (Alfredo Marceneiro, 1961, Columbia 33 CSX21), "Maldição" (Fernando Farinha, c. 1965, Parlophone PMCJ 62), "Sonho desfeito" (Manuel de Almeida, 1966, Marfer M.E.L. 2038), "A cinza nunca está morta" (Vicente da Câmara, 1970, Alvorada LP-S-04-79-A), "Água louca da Ribeira" (Ricardo Ribeiro, 2010, EMI Music Portugal 5 099963 285222), to name just a few.

For practical reasons, the examples given here are easier to trace; other, not so well-known melodies are much harder to associate, and even the community sometimes does not fully agree on which melody is being sung. The most knowledgeable performers, inventive and aware of their physical characteristics, can be so creative that it is a matter of debate, even among the community's *connoisseurs*, which traditional fado he or she is playing or singing on a particular performance or recording.

At an archive, a fado recording would be catalogued using the title under which it was published: "Desespero" by Filipe Pinto, "Escada sem corrimão" by Camané, and "Deste-me tudo o que tinhas" by Aldina Duarte. No association whatsoever would be established between the three, even if they were performing the same traditional fado (a particularly relevant correlation to the fado community of practice).

The most obvious task of the archivist (to catalog the recording with the title used for publication) is, in fact, erasing data. In order to retain relevant information for the community, the archivist should also document the name of the traditional fado [melody] recorded. If that information is not documented in any way, as time passes, by blindly following the technical procedure, information will be actively erased and forgotten. This is particularly relevant after the fado *heritisation*, when new emerging singers and instrumentalists have very little to no involvement with the community of practice, most of them learning their repertoire from published recordings.

The same problem applies to research and academia. As time on the field went by, having gained the trust of the members of the fado community, I repeatedly heard comments denoting that active erasure of memory, as the resigned old guitarist confided to me, in a late afternoon, when discussing the use of a certain “fado tradicional”: “If the Professor [a published researcher] told you so... who am I to say otherwise...?” This rhetoric question was a call to the impact of the asphyxiating academic narrative. It was not a question of researchers, nor the institution’s engagement with the community of practice. It was about the “elephant in the room”: the researchers’ use of ethnographic data. Nowadays, the communities of practice are reading the researchers’ papers and books, they are critically assessing those works, knowing that they would be the weakest link (powerless and *prestigeless* compared to the “expert”), and, for that reason, they opt for a silent critique, only shared among “equals”. To paraphrase Ceribašić (2018, 237), one can find a lot about collaborative bottom-up interventions, empowerment and advocacy of communities and we believe (we want, we need to believe) that it is always the case. But it is not. It is an unsubstantiated assumption that the research always looks for “a collaborative, dialogical, and horizontal knowledge production” (Ibid., 239), that researchers are always neutral and disinterested parties in those processes.

Knowledge was, in fact, being erased by archives, when they selected or highlighted specific items and data; by prestigious academics, when they chose their research topic to match the most looked-after issue or focus on items that sustain their argument, ignoring any controversy; by monographs and successful sound recordings, with all the weight that the fact of being published has in an “economy of prestige” of academic or successful phonographic publications with great public or academic impact.

That was the framework for *HeritaMus*,<sup>20</sup> a three years European project funded by the Joint Program Initiative for Cultural Heritage (JPI-CH). The research consortium was composed of three universities (the Portuguese *Instituto de Etnomusicologia* from *Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas* of *Universidade Nova de Lisboa*, the Andalusian *Universidad de Sevilla*, and the French *Centre de Recherche en Ethnomusicologie* at the *Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique*), two associated partners (*Museu do Fado* and *Centro Andaluz de Documentación del Flamenco*), a technical partner (the *Laboratoire d’Intelligence Artificielle et Sémantique des Don-*

20 For more details on *HeritaMus* project see Félix 2019.

nées – Paris 8) and an IT company (*Epsilon – Alcen*), gathered to work on a project meant to bring democracy into the “archive”, contributing to a democratic access to information, but especially to the production of the information itself. We believed that the UNESCO ICH program was one of the most relevant laboratories to explore practices as intangible heritage (how to play and create music), in articulation with its tangible assets (the documents that register transient acoustic events), but also, because of its impact, a privileged framework to consider the consequences of socio-political processes of “patrimonialization”, “heritisation” and “touristification”.

With *HeritaMus*, by focusing specifically on the relationship between musical practices and historical sound documents, considering current uses and re-uses of the community’s history and repertoire, the team carried out a cooperative research project with the stakeholders and community of Fado in Portugal,<sup>21</sup> supported by the development of a new database and research tool (*HeritaMus* software). The project was focused on deepening the intricate relationship between intangible heritage (knowledge, memory, and identity), tangible cultural assets (namely, historical sound recordings), and heritage practices (access to historical recordings), gathering all kinds of actors (human and non-human, intangible and tangible) in complex networks, exploring the technical possibilities given by new forms of visualization of complex data. With *HeritaMus*, we followed the historical commercial recordings in their path to mold the community’s history. By doing that we could represent and explore the musical genre’s memory-shaping processes and heritage configuration.

The theoretical framework was designed making use of Latour’s “parliament of things” (Latour 1999) and applying it to a different set of actors. Like Latour’s call to recognise the Nature’s ability to act in the same way as other human actors, we would focus on the mutual agency of human actors (musicians) and non-human actors (course-groove recordings) in the process of shaping the musical genre and the community’s history and practice, in a word: Fado’ Intangible Culture Heritage. At the same time, based on that assumption, we would also overcome the “institutional *diktat*” based on arguments of authority (associated with keywords such as “authenticity”, “truth”, “ancient”, “heritage”) materialised on narratives emanated from academic entities, museums, and archives. Our purpose was not to unlock forgotten knowledge or reveal old/“traditional” practices. We were not trying to be restorers nor archeologists. Our aim was to identify actors (human and non-human), register their narratives (highlighting alliances, controversies, and reasons to act), thus creating the fado’ “parliament of things”, tracing fluid networks, mapping processes of identity and community-building.

At *HeritaMus*, “past” and “heritage” were not adjectives qualifying an actor or an act, they were themselves impacting non-human actors. The project rested on the dynamics between “tradition” and “living practice”, the fringes between “safeguarding” and “creation”, between what is preserved and transmitted and what has to change to be kept alive; to put it briefly, UNESCO ICH definition

21 The original project envisaged similar fieldwork with the flamenco community in Andalusia. For multiple reasons this was not possible in due time.

and major hardship for institutions of memory (museums, archives, academia). Taking advantage of the moment when the fado community had contact, for the first time, with an unprecedented number of historical sound recordings, knowing that the sound recordings would have a significant impact on the historical perception of the genre and even the community's identity, we based our research on laboratory sessions of audio-elicitation, inviting the community members to critically listen to the historical recordings once digitised, and to freely associate sounds and discs, repertoire and concepts, musical elements and sonic memories.

The process was kept as simple as possible. Our action was based on the assumption that:

1. any item/actor (being it human or non-human) is defined by its relationships with other items/actors. None of them is an atomistic entity;
2. each relationship is built upon the connections between actors (nodes).

A sound recording was never a closed, fixed, autonomous entity, but a node in a fluid network of related actors.

The designed software is a HTML based tool for multi-users to register items/actors they consider relevant for the representation of their universe of practice, their "parliament". The process can be represented as:

1. item/actor/node (1) is defined by its -relationship-> with item/actor/node (2), and so on;
2. in the same way, the -relationship-> is determined by both nodes based on the typology of association they have;
3. as data is inputted from different sources (creating "personal" or "topical" graphs), a general graph, much more complex and dense, would be generated.

The tool provided the technical means for effective cooperative interaction between researchers and stakeholders to curate data. The process was, in fact, very simple: a computer with the digitized "old fados", a piece of virtual white paper, and a virtual pen to draw nodes and relationships. The graph – theoretically informed, but user-friendly designed – was used for data input, retrieval and visualisation. Queries were written to support analysis of complex and dense data in a non-hierarchical, non-compartmented way.

Currently, the *HeritaMus* software source code is published at GitHub<sup>22</sup> with a Creative Commons license. The French team has picked up the project and is planning to use Artificial Intelligence to generate associations, while another team is implementing natural language queries. One member of our IT team is continuously publishing nice and unexpected queries with a structure he describes as being “elegant”... And I will do all I can to adapt these cooperative curation processes to the workflow of description and documentation in my vision for the future Portugal National Sound Archive.

## IMPLEMENTATION OF *HERITAMUS*

22 <https://github.com/HeritaMus/HeritaMus> and <https://heritamus.fcsh.unl.pt>.

role in the configuration of cultural heritage.<sup>23</sup> More than ever, ICH became a political arena.

The *HeritaMus* project was aimed at the fado community members, providing them with a way to take control of their own voice, reinforcing their ability to act and document their worldview, register their narratives and their actions. This procedure had an unequivocal impact on the collected data made available. *HeritaMus* proved to be a useful and powerful resource to document the multiple simultaneous realities, where each mobilized actor is taken as an “equal among equals”. By doing this, we prevent the fixation of a single general master-narrative, even if disguised with a bottom-up “flavour” (Salemink 2006).

At *HeritaMus* there are no “spokespersons”, nor “representatives”, just actors making their own “parliament”. No one – a musician, a researcher, an “organic intellectual” or a “cultural broker” – is to be considered value-free, nor an objective narrator; no one knows best. All actors are assumed as political actors, negotiating their own *auctoritas*, through an individual mobilisation of things. We just designed a tool to register each actor’s own voices, and see how history, memory and identity are constructed and negotiated, even if the result would be fragmented or full of controversies. After all, at *HeritaMus*, we were not looking for an elegant historical picture.

Five years latter, after the end of *HeritaMus* project, in a time of intense debate around “decolonising the archive” and “community *archivism*”, it is the right time to ask: was *HeritaMus* enough? And was it the righteous path? I do not have any clear cut answer to that.<sup>24</sup> I believe we are all trying our best to mobilise people, communities, friends and foes, to help us to improve our descriptive and documenting actions. What we know for sure is that the “graph”, the “picture”, the “map”, are much more detailed than the old catalog registry and that more attractors were identified than before.

“The Archived”, “the Recorded”, “the Preserved”, “the [UNESCO] Enlisted” are just multiple faces of “the Valued”. The officers of this new (too powerful) ideology, “The Experts”, are, in fact, gatekeepers, who have a critical impact on future representation. The acts of “collecting”, “registering”, “archiving”, “documenting”, “studying”; the acts of writing, speaking, telling the story, representing, of displaying, have been the privilege of that cast of officers, manipulating their technical expertise and theoretical tools. This fact is assumed (and “published”, which, by the way is yet another instance of power) by the social sciences since the mid-1980s: the celebrated “poetics” and “politics” of social sciences (see Clifford and Marcus 1986). Still, this tragic machine of *social construction of scientific facts* and heritage kept far too many people away from those power tools. Stakeholders, entire communities and individual prac-

23 See the relevant work of Abélès in this particular topic (2011).

24 From the *HeritaMus* experience, we can conclude that, first, as simple as a process can be designed, the heavy weight of an institution will always play a role; secondly, the interface has to be simple and clear, still, people will take a passive approach to it; but, thirdly, as the first results appear on the screen we always got a kind of “Ah-Ah moment”, when people understood the process as an emulation of their way of thinking.



titioners have been alienated and kept outside the “archive door”. The problem was even worse with musical sounds. Sound archives deal with tangible assets, of course, but, in order to document those assets, they have to deal with associated intangible knowledge. But “assets” and “knowledge” usually follow different paths. “Assets” are considered archival and/or museological items, while “knowledge” is the subject of monographs and scientific papers, or remains untreated and, eventually, forgotten. So, most of the time, they remain unarticulated—or, at best, poorly articulated!

No heritage process can succeed without taking into serious consideration the widest variety possible of human and non-human actors, focusing on notions such as “mediation”, “translation”, “cultural brokers”, and “networks”.

*HeritaMus* was designed to bypass the usual obstacles for knowledge transfer from the academia to the community and vice-versa, counteracting the “gatekeepers effect”. Through the implementation of this new resource for the management and dissemination of historical documents based on a cooperative model of research and a sustainable strategy for protecting and managing cultural heritage, researching the uses and re-uses of different kinds of cultural heritage (as living practices), and safeguarding tangible cultural heritage (in our current case, historical sound recordings) as fundamental documents of cultural practices we can, effectively, put into practice the principles and values underlying the UNESCO Convention for the ICH. *HeritaMus* is a tool for democratic curatorship of heritage by giving the right to curate sounds and knowledge to all (and in particular to the ones who make them). Because, in the end, the people, the community, know much more than all libraries in the world.



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## ПЕДРО ФЕЛИКС

„ПА ... АКО ТИ ЈЕ ПРОФЕСОР ТАКО РЕКАО ... КО САМ ЈА ДА СЕ НЕ СЛОЖИМ?“

УТИЦАЈ АКАДЕМСКОГ СВЕТА НА ЗНАЊЕ ЗАЈЕДНИЦЕ

И ЈЕДНА СТРАТЕГИЈА ИЗ АРХИВА

(РЕЗИМЕ)

Када су установљавала концепт нематеријалног културног наслеђа, међународна тела као што је Унеско настојала су да дођу до новог имена за неканонско и неспоменичко наслеђе, обезбеђујући нови фокус на заједнице чије су праксе и идентитети базирани на елементима с нове листе.

Ипак, препознавање статуса наслеђа зависило је од пријаве кандидатуре осмишљене од стране академске заједнице и(ли) реномираних истраживача одговорних за организацију знања и продукцију званичног наратива. Заједнице су тежиле отуђењу од ових процеса (иако су дискурзивно биле у центру дешавања и докумената).

Посматрајући португалски случај, и нарочито кандидатуру за фодо, знање о „традиционалним праксама“ и „традиционалном репертоару“ било је засновано

на искристалисаном наративу. С друге стране, фадо-заједница била је повезана с јединственом количином историјских звучних снимака (објављених између 1904. и 1960. године). Пројекат *HeritaMus* дао је предлог за стварање алатке за кооперативно и децентрализовано кустовство овог фонографског наслеђа и регистрације пратећег нематеријалног знања.

*HeritaMus* био је кооперативни истраживачки пројекат с актерима из фадо-заједнице, усредсређујући се на однос између музичких пракси и историјских звучних докумената, притом узимајући у обзир тренутну употребу историје и репертоара заједнице. Циљ је био продубљивање запетљаних односа између нематеријалног наслеђа (знања, сећања и идентитета), материјалних културних добара (историјских звучних снимака) и пракси наслеђа (приступа историјским снимцима), и то кроз окупљање различитих актера (људских и нељудских, нематеријалних и материјалних) у комплексне мреже које ће истраживати техничке могућности нових облика визуелизације комплексних података.