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The Routledge Companion to Intangible Cultural Heritage (Eds. Michelle L. Stefano and Peter Davis), London: Routledge, 502 pages, ISBN 9781138860551

The knowledge of the cultural values promoted in the Routledge Companion volume is highlighted by a series of topics addressed by top specialists and cultural heritage experts from different areas around the world.

Routledge has published its Companion to Intangible Cultural Heritage. The volume consists of over 500 pages. It was edited by Michelle Stefano from the American Folklife Center in Washington DC and Emeritus Professor of Museology Peter Davis from Newcastle University, UK. It is a most welcome addition to literature, and for all who want to deepen their understanding of the scholarly research into and safeguarding practice of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This Routledge Companion contains 38 articles written altogether by 54 authors. The contributions are organised in 6 sections.

The first part begins with a brief overview of the Unesco Convention of 2003 on the Intangible Cultural Heritage, the Origin and the Way of Paradigm Action.

The second part is called reality check and deals with the challenges faced by Intangible Cultural Heritage and its protection. The third part supports it through seven pertinent case studies on how to act.

Part four deals with ICH and place and landscape, the way it is linked to specific locations. Part five deals with ICH and museums and archives; in a short contribution Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett gives a very interesting example of the use of intangible heritage to construct tangible elements of an ancient synagogue for the displays in the new Polin museum in Warsaw.

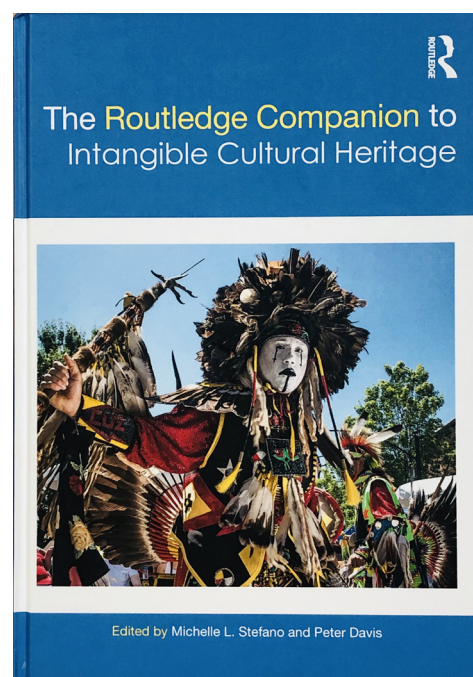
The last part is devoted entirely to alternative approaches to protecting and promoting Intangible Cultural Heritage through eco-museums. Through the case studies presented, we can see a relationship of interdependence between culture and development. Two notable examples are: the Rovijin Museum in Croatia that revived the art of building boats, respectively the construction of terraced vineyards and chestnut drying installations. All these are aimed at reviving traditional

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crafts to shape the future and sustainable local development.

Promoting and protecting Intangible Cultural Heritage is highlighted in case studies in North America and Europe. Speaking from this point, the publisher Michelle Stefano highlights in an interview with the eminent heritage of intangible culture in the US Dr Richard Kurin, director of the Smithsonian Center for Culture, that institutional involvement in cultural groups is very reserved. Kurin arguing that the authorities have no desire to create and regulate bureaucratic agencies to control Intangible Cultural Heritage listing.

I would like to ask the question: why the

intangible cultural heritage only developed in the 21st century? In her work, Janet Blake highlights the reasons that were closely related to the European preference for tangibles, but also the interest in paradigms protecting patrimony of national governments and international organizations.

Publishing the Routledge Companion volume is beneficial to academic recognition, providing all experts with a new vision of intangible cultural heritage. However, I noticed a blur in drafting this volume related to the lack of documentation on the creation of agencies to monitor cultural heritage. Why is not possible?