10. The Role of the Ethnographic Museum in Safeguarding Traditional Romanian Dance

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This paper examines challenges and opportunities in safeguarding Romanian traditional dance within the framework of the UNESCO 2003 Convention. It distinguishes between traditional dance, folklorism, and dance of the ethnographical type, emphasising the ethnographic museum's potential role in revitalisation, education, and community engagement. By aligning conservation with safeguarding principles, museums can foster sustainable cultural transmission and recontextualisation of Romanian dance heritage.

Keywords: traditional dance, folkloric dance, folklorism, dance of the ethnographical type, ethnographic museum, revitalisation, community participation

Introduction

Since the signing of the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2003 (UNESCO 2023) and its incorporation into national legislation (Law 410 of 2005) there has arguably been sufficient time for its principles to have been implemented into Romanian cultural practice. Certainly, significant transformations in Romania have occurred that impact successful safeguarding: the creation of government institutions and bodies to manage the intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter ICH), changes in rural communities and perception of their own local culture and cultural heritage, and an openness in ethnographic museums, in particular, to ICH and to capitalisation of touristic interest in traditional culture.

There remains, however, room for improvement, especially with regard to the safeguarding of Romanian *traditional dance* which is hampered by two major problems. One major impediment is the dominance of theatrical conventions for the performance of *traditional dance*, namely folklorism, which remains uppermost in the Romanian public's consciousness and taste. The other issue is the continuing lack of compatibility between the ethnographic museum's adherence to the model of preservation and that of safeguarding.[1] The causes of this situation are multiple but space permits here only a brief contextual summary.

Safeguarding and Intangible Cultural Heritage

The UNESCO 2003 Convention has occasioned many debates, variously highlighting its strengths, limitations, ambiguities, and problems.[2] Two potentially conflicting understandings of its notion of safeguarding are articulated as "a pledge for a faithfulness to the past" (Bakka 2015, 149) and "a mechanism through which selected aspects of "real life" are dressed with patrimonial value by governmental agencies, thus becoming meta-cultural realities" (Arantes 2012, 22). According to the UNESCO 2003 Convention, key aspects of safeguarding are: (a) recognition by bearers of the ICH element

[1] For a broader discussion of these models, termed, "conservation paradigm" and "safeguarding paradigm" by Norwegian ethnochoreologists Egil Bakka and Tone Erlien (see Bakka 2015; Erlien and Bakka 2017: 136).

[2] See, for example, Kurin 2004; Taylor 2008; Arantes 2012; Ştiucă 2014; Hulubaș 2015; Bakka 2015; Lo Iacono and Brown 2016; Carr 2023; Bakka and Karoblis 2021.

as an element of their own tradition, namely that practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, objects, instruments, artefacts and cultural spaces associated with them are assumed by the interested communities, groups and individuals (hereafter CGI) as elements of their own tradition; (b) intergenerational transmission; and (c) the recreation of the element belonging to the ICH. A tangible object that has a connection with the intangible element is also part of the ICH (so there is no break between the tangible and the intangible), and the heritage bearers are both subjects and objects of the actions of heritage constitution and safeguarding (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 2). Involvement of the CGI is reinforced in Article 15 of the Convention, which expressly mentions the encouragement by the signatory State of the participation of the CGI in the safeguarding process.

Responsibilities for safeguarding, as per the UNESCO 2003 Convention, are divided, negotiated and assumed between several interested individuals and bodies: (a) the community or group of bearers of cultural elements (communities, groups, individuals or CGIs); (b) the scientific community; (c) the political community, including state and private (non-governmental organisations or NGOs). Safeguarding actions can be undertaken individually and/or in partnership between (a), (b) and (c): identification and documentation can be carried out from (a), (b), (c); research – from (b); conservation, transmission – from (a); protection, promotion, improvement, revitalisation – from (a), (b) and (c).

In Romania, in order for a cultural element to be considered an element of intangible heritage, it must be mentioned in the National Repertoire of Intangible Cultural Heritage (n.d.), compiled by the National Commission for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage within the Ministry of Culture of Romania. In practice, the intangible cultural heritage is a politically manageable practice cut from a very complex socio-cultural reality, from a cultural continuum in which modernity and tradition intertwine. Not every element of a community's culture is an element of heritage. In order to fulfil this condition, an element of tradition must be identified and inventoried as an element of heritage, the construction and identification of cultural heritage being both a political act and an act of power (Kuutma 2012, 42). Interestingly, the text of the UNESCO 2003 Convention does not explicitly refer to intangible cultural heritage as "traditional". Instead, the notion of "traditional" is implied. The specified conditions require that the cultural practice is transmitted from generation to generation, is constantly recreated by communities and groups, and has

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an element that supports the sense of identity and the sense of continuity (UNESCO 2003). Thus, safeguarding is a series of actions that have, as their ultimate goal, the perpetuation of elements of intangible culture through intergenerational transmission (UNESCO 2003, 3). In Romania, such conditions are exclusively identifiable with peasant dances which are considered by Romanians to be "traditional".

Traditional Dance, Dance Folklorism and Dances of the Ethnographical Type

Generally, it is possible to distinguish two types of dance activities which are related in varying degrees to the cultural heritage of the Romanian peasantry. I term these "traditional dance" and "dance of the ethnographical type". I briefly outline their provenance and characteristics below, together with a short explanatory note on the meaning of dance and folklorism in the Romanian context .

Traditional Dance and its Relationship to Peasant Culture

It is important to recognise that the peasantry not only represented a separate stratum of Romanian society, but also accounted for nearly eighty percent of the population during the interwar period of the early twentieth century. Their distinctive lifestyle and world view was rooted in rural communities which were dependent on a social, economic and cultural existence organised around the household and the village (as living spaces), around the family (the small community) and the inhabitants of the village (as an extended community). Certain characteristic behaviour and social practices, values, meanings, mentalities and non-ceremonial/ceremonial/ritual expressions that were formerly practised in peasant culture continue to be manifest in contemporary Romania. Romanians refer to the social-cultural environment and its inhabitants who inherited this peasant culture as "traditional culture". This, in brief, is the context for Romanian traditional dance which is directly related to peasant dance, retaining all its attributes.

Romanians regard peasant culture as an important aspect of their tradition and as a significant component of their ethnic identity. That is why peasant dance is also perceived as part of the cultural tradition and hence

assimilated with traditional dance. From my perspective on this filial relationship, traditional dance retains key peasant cultural features: rural in its environment, non-literate in transmission, folkloric in form and customary in its norms. It is informally transmitted primarily via imitation, and aspects of its evolution are typically attributed to the collective character of creation. The traditionalism that marks the dance is combined with adaptation and variability: these are traits that support the balance between values of the past and those of the present. As a cultural expression, traditional dance works syncretically and is closely linked to other languages (musical, verbal, and the like) in order to perform essential functions for the wellbeing of the individual and the community (socialisation, social cohesion, communication, transmission, fun, education).

Dance and Folklorism

The attributes of traditional dance noted above are no longer found to a large extent when they become part of *folklorism*, because folklorism in Romania means the selective use of folklore outside its peasant context. Folklorism modifies the expressions of peasant culture, adapting them in this way to a new cultural paradigm specific to modernity. In the case of peasant dance, this change led to its approximation to the traditions and theatrical style of classical dance. In the interwar period and then in the period when the communist regime was established in Romania, most of the Romanian instructors and choreographers involved in the transmission of peasant dance in the urban environment were professionally trained or frequented classical or modern dance studios. Consequently, these instructors and choreographers lacked an ethnographic/sociological perspective on the transmission of peasant dances; instead, it was one deeply influenced by dance and ballet performance.[3] Hence their way of conceiving "folkloric" stage dance performances was mediated and shaped by understanding, through the stylistics of classical dance[4] (Vasilescu 2022, 46).

[3] Although during the interwar era, ethnography and sociology were two sciences that developed strongly, the ethnographic/sociological vision of peasant dance did not influence transmission outside peasant culture.

[4] Even today, professional folk ensembles that capitalise on traditional Romanian dance include classical dance studies in their daily work schedule, a training which exerts strong influence on the style of interpretation, in blatant opposition to the stylistics of traditional dance. That is why I believe that, at least for the situation in Romania, the generic term "stylisation" (used internationally) is better translated as "balleticisation", a term that refers much more precisely to these stylistic changes.

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Through its cultural institutions, the communist state reinforced this institutionalised version of what it claimed to be "folklore" and did not support organic folklore which was integrated into peasant society. Under the supervision of Soviet "inspectors", "folklore" creation (actually inspired by the folklore of dance) developed very quickly through the establishment of "folklore ensembles" in the period 1948-1960 (Vasilescu 2022, 44–54), taking centre stage of mass culture, inhibiting and marginalising the real life of peasant folklore.

These performance institutions (some professional) became or were imposed as models for the mass movement of folklore dance ensembles. They contributed profoundly to the profile that Romanian folklorism still has today – spectacular creations inspired by dance folklore. They thus represent a departure from the principles underlying the safeguarding process of intangible cultural heritage.

Dance of the Ethnographical Type

My definition of those dances in Romania which I term "dances of the ethnographical type" refers to a dance that has been realised in its creation and performance by a performer who is outside the context of traditional culture and thus is situated within the framework of folklorism. Folklorism as understood in Romania may denote not only stylised, or more accurately termed, balleticised uses of folklore elements that were once practised in peasant culture; it may also signal selected use of folklore elements and thus constitutes a wide framework. A *dance of the ethnographical type* is thus within this frame of folklorism for it refers to a *traditional dance* copied by a person who has not inherited or played a full part in the cultural or traditional background from which the dance originates. This understanding has parallels, though it should not be viewed as conflatable, with Egil Bakka's notion of "user" (1992) which he coined in relation to twentieth-century revivalist practices of Norwegian folk dance and costume. It is also attuned to the concept of reflective dance as defined by Canadian ethnochoreologist Andriy Nahachewsky (2012) and which indicates a scenario where a performer enacts an active consciousness of that dance's relation to its past. I might also broaden my discussion here to embrace the notion of ethno-identity dance as distinguished by American ethnochoreologist Anthony Shay (2016). However, my reference to these correspondences and distinctions in conceptual terminology aims to draw attention to this wid-

er literature which has some affinities with the practice of Romanian *traditional dance* but, which given the complexity of the topic, deserves far fuller treatment than may be afforded in this chapter. For present purposes, suffice it to say that there are undoubted overlapping correspondences with these various definitions but also important deviations when considering the Romanian situation.

In defining *dance of the ethnographical type* then, I have approached the subject from the perspective of the performer and focus mainly on the formal aspects of dance. The criteria that operate here are: (1) the relationship that the person who practises the dance has with the tradition of a community (put simply, dance of my own tradition versus dance foreign to my tradition) and (2) a formal criterion: that of conformity/non-conformity of the dance forms to that tradition. The form of the dance is given by the kinetic and rhythmic structure – the compositional modalities – and the style of interpretation. The *dance of the ethnographical type* is thus defined by this formal relationship with its model, a *traditional dance*, and is characterised by the intention to use the stylistic parameters of traditional dance movements. I have referred to this relationship elsewhere (Petac, 2015) in terms of *referentiality* vs. *fictionalisation*, as processes through which traditional dance transforms into *dance of the ethnographic type*.

It is important to comprehend that the term *dance of the ethnographical type* is by no means equivalent to the dance as recorded by the dance ethnographer in the field. In this respect, I deviate from habitual usage in the ethnochoreological literature. For the researcher, the recorded *traditional dance* becomes an ethnographic object, just as any other object brought from a house (peasant or not, to illustrate an aspect of a material or immaterial culture) into a museum becomes an ethnographic object. The object of observation (*traditional dance*) does not change its form. Taken out of its organic context (traditional culture) dance thus becomes, an object of ethnographic observation. The researcher does not recreate it physically, dancing it, unless he or she can, for didactic purposes. The moment he or she dances it, however, the researcher enters the logic of a creator who reproduces, and *re*-creates a model foreign to his or her own culture of movement (unless of course recording from within their own culture).

A further question might relate to why this category of dances is considered, within my typology, to be *dance of the ethnographical type* and not simply ethnographical dance? The answer is that dances within folklorism change in their form, are no longer identical to their source and in their

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translation from traditional culture to modern culture are re-created according to criteria foreign to the initial ones. This therefore results in a new type of dance, subject to a new taxonomy, in a new framework.

Most of the concept of *traditional dance*, as well as the socio-cultural determinations are lost when the dance as practised in peasant culture is copied. The other potential models of movement that can arise based on the concept of dance are lost, given that this concept of dance will no longer be known in so many of its potential variants. Like any copy of an original, the *dance of the ethnographical type* can be faithful to or further away from the dance as it was practised in peasant or traditional cultures. Within folklorism, *traditional dance* forms, as they are transformed into forms of the *dance of the ethnographical type*, inevitably undergo a process of resemanticisation.

How then might *traditional dance* in Romania be safeguarded for the future? And what role might the ethnographic museum take in making this happen?

The Ethnographic Museum as an Institution for Safeguarding Traditional Dance

The contemporary museum is a space in which new knowledge and discoveries are created and incorporated through participation and interactive pedagogies. No longer a repository of artifacts, a *participatory* museum is an institution open to multidirectional content experiences, a platform where visitors are content creators, distributors, collaborators, and critics (Simon 2010).

Knowledge is thus no longer the exclusive attribute of the museum employee but is instead built through dialogue, rendering the museum more attractive to visitors, more personal and in the process, more democratic (Kreps 2020).

Museum collections and exhibitions offer ways to construct personal and collective identities, as well as to maintain community cohesion. In this context, the museum is both a place and the voice of memory (Keene 2005, 98). As British museum curator Suzanne Keene observes, "identity and memory are inseparable, and objects – things – are very important in building and maintaining both" (2005, 91). In this sense, the ethnographic museum emerges as a particularly appropriate institution for safeguarding this heritage.

The question posed by Norwegian ethnochoreologists Tone Erlien and Egil Bakka (2017, 137) – namely, whether museums are sufficiently prepared to safeguard traditional dance – resonates within the Romanian cultural environment. From the perspective of Romanian museum legislation, aligned with European standards and the recommendations of ICOM and UNESCO, I would be inclined to answer in the affirmative. The reality, however, is that the core museum principle of conservation, is not yet organically intertwined with the principle of safeguarding. Although museums can and should safeguard ICH, they currently lack the optimised functions, procedural rules, and secondary legislation. In my opinion, the principal problem in achieving the letter and spirit of safeguarding traditional dance in Romania lies in the prevailing public and institutional mentality which remains largely shaped by the performative model of folklorism.

The ethnographic museum has two ways to engage in safeguarding traditional dance: first, *in situ* protection of traditional dance; and second, protection within the ethnographic museum (in particular in the open-air museum). In these two models there can be: (a) activities without the practice of dance (scientific, educational, promotion and improvement activities); (b) dance practice activities; (c) mixed activities (dance practice combined with museum education activities, scientific activities, and so on).

Safeguarding *In Situ*

The ethnographic museum can support a community of traditional dance bearers through several means: by engaging in identifying, documenting, and researching dance/dance practice; through promotion and valorisation actions (dance practice events, exhibitions, films, studies on the heritage of the respective dance; through revitalisation actions; and through advisory activities on the safeguarding procedure and on the benefits and risks involved in this process. Of great importance here is ethnochoreological research for the quality of *in situ* safeguarding. Careful research into the processes of creation, transmission and signification of dances in their contexts can outline a clear picture of dance concepts and its socio-cultural functions (and therefore of the emic perspective); nor should the importance of the video/audio/photo recordings created during the research be neglected. These recordings can always be referred to as scientific authentication landmarks for a particular dance practice.

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Revitalisation is a safeguarding activity in which the museum can become involved and help a community that is about to lose a dance practice. The central element of this action is ethnological testimony. By *ethnological testimony* I mean a bearer of an element of culture, who can be directly or indirectly involved in the transmission of that cultural element. The ethnochoreologists/researchers of the museum can advise (using information and recordings about that dance), but only the ethnological witness can confirm/censor and acknowledge, authenticating the revitalised dance forms as elements of the local tradition. A model of good practice for the involvement of the ethnographic museum in the *in situ* safeguarding of a dance/dance practices/dance event involves: (1) ethnochoreological research of the local *traditional dance* culture; (2) elaboration of research reports, ethnochoreological studies on the local *traditional dance* culture; and (3) developing recommendations on future actions included in the guarantee. In the case of revitalisation, it must be recognised that the reconstruction of that tradition is an act of cutting out certain elements from a tradition, an activity that may lead to the exclusion of certain elements more or less relevant to that dance practice. Therefore, a revitalisation must aim to encompass as wide as possible all the aspects involved in that dance practice, no matter how negligible they may seem at first glance.

Traditional Dance Practice Event in the Ethnographic Museum

In an open-air museum, for example, a Traditional Dance Practice Event (hereinafter TDPE) can take place in spaces that were originally used as a dance space for village dance events.[5] In this way, an atmosphere can be restored that contributes to the consolidation of the dance experience in the memory of the participants, and thus to socialisation. For the community of *traditional dance* bearers, the TDPE can be integrated as a new event of the local culture, as a new dance context.

For *traditional dance* bearers, TDPE can be considered as: (a) an act of promotion of their dance; (b) an action with educational value; (c) a mu-

[5] In the village, during the warm periods, people dancing took place in summer in open spaces (usually somewhere in the middle of the village), in barns (buildings where the cart and other agricultural work tools were housed) or, in certain ethnographic areas, in constructions specially intended for dance, otherwise called: *pavilion, shed,* or *gazebo.* In winter or in the cold period, dancing took place in the room of a house.

seum action (an "exhibition of intangible artifacts" [Kirshenblatt-Gimblett 2004, 53]) and (d) an action combining all of the above.

From the museum's perspective, TDPE can be thought of as a lived exhibition in which there is an *evanescent intangible artifact.* Given, however, the impossibility of the visitor holistically to know the local culture of *traditional dance* and to integrate it into his or her cultural practice, both the dance and the dance exhibition do not constitute an act of safeguarding *in situ* (a fact also noted by Bakka 2015, 153–154).

What the museum visitor can partially know is the form of the dance, its movement patterns. In TDPE, the visitor has access to the features of dance through his or her body, understanding the particular way in which that community relates through dance. So, the key points of TDPE in the ethnographic museum are: socialisation through dance (with all the benefits it brings to the contemporary individual) and getting to know the culture of that community through one's own body and mind. Erlien notes these aspects when she states that "the core of the problem is then how to expose a socialising practice rather than a show" (2020, 34).

The interaction between the museum visitor and the bearer of the *traditional dance* adds to the museum a dimension of space that is discovered sensorially and emotionally. The context that the ethnographic museum offers reinforces this knowledge with ethnographic information. The museum thus transforms itself into a place of rational, emotional and sensory knowledge.

These "exhibitions" being lived and practised cannot be made permanent. This ephemerality is an important feature of these "dance exhibitions", compared to a permanent exhibition such as an open-air ethnographic museum, because *traditional dance* bearers are not dance professionals nor museum employees, nor is dancing their sole occupation. For them, dance is first and foremost a socio-cultural practice that, in the community's calendar, has relatively stable dates. The permanence of such an exhibition of lived dance contradicts the very logic of safeguarding by intervening in the rhythmicity imposed by the local tradition on dance occasions. TDPE in the museum is an exception to the usual calendar of the traditional community. Therefore, the ethnographic museum may at most influence the community that organises the dance practice event, but it cannot make its inclusion a permanent "exhibition".

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Dance Workshop

Another type of activity that may involve *traditional dance* in the museum is the dance workshop. In such activities, the main dimension is didactic, seeking to educate participants about heritage, the target groups being children, students, and those who are just eager to learn. This requires interactive methodologies and concern for developing movement skills. Depending on the age group, the objectives can be established around knowledge of the local repertoire and understanding the diversity of dance culture by assimilating the differences in movement and rhythm between different types and ethnographic areas. The major goal of these workshops is to develop dance skills in the movement patterns of different dance traditions, to socialise and to foster a positive perception of tradition.

A sustainable model of safeguarding *traditional dance* through the dance practice event in the ethnographic museum I believe must have: (1) a clearly defined concept and objectives; (2) the presence of a community of bearers of *traditional dance* (dancers, musicians); (3) the creation of dance and music repertoires with a clear and attested local identity; (4) a museum space suitable for dance; and (5) opening of the event for the practice of dance by museum visitors.

Dance of the Ethnographical Type Practice Event in the Ethnographic Museum

Held in an ethnographic museum, the *dance of the ethnographical type* practice event (hereinafter DETPE) is certainly the most appropriate alternative to the dance of the ethnographical type performance and the most appropriate way for the refolklorisation[6] of dances. This type of activity does not fall within the process of safeguarding, but rather borrows from the logic of safeguarding by virtue of the fact that there is a direct and close relationship between the non-spectacular practice of dance and socialisation within the dance community. This relationship is the foundation of the re-

[6] The term "refolklorisation" can be understood as a designator of the process by which a cultural element (for example, dance) that has disappeared from a culture with oral transmission (in the Romanian case, the dance culture called "traditional"), that is, from a folkloric culture, is reintegrated into the processes of oral transmission, that is, those processes of transmission and creation that respectively support the production of variants of the element.

signification of *dance of the ethnographical type* forms and is also the basis of the process of refolklorisation of dances, a process that, in my opinion, must be a fundamental goal of these events.

The coagulating element of *dance of the ethnographical type* communities is dance. These communities are usually made up of people who live in urban areas. Ensembles or groups of the *dance of the ethnographical type* can be considered dance communities insofar as the practice of dance is carried out according to the characteristics of DETPE, rather than according to the features of the spectacular dance model as in dance folklorism. The *dance of the ethnographical type* can achieve the maximum degree of referentiality only when practised within the framework of DETPE.

The disappearance of theatrical conditions and the rediscovery of community relations specific to a dance event is the key to rediscovering the function of dance as a social coagulant. The disappearance of the stage and its conventions, of standardisations and homogenisations, of the choreographer and choreography, of stylistic approximation and structural eclecticism, and of a high degree of fictionalisation makes way for the organic manifestation of dance, as a social practice rather than an artistic one.

The dance space once again becomes a space whose proxemics can facilitate social relations between the participants of the DETPE, to support the resignification of *dance of the ethnographical type*. Dancers can rediscover the organicity of the development of forms through the processes of folkloric creation. In this way, the style of the *dance of the ethnographical type* can find its realisation in terms of the model (*traditional dance*).

DETPE can therefore recreate the context necessary to realise the concept of dance and to rediscover the processes typical of folklore, leaving free the reconfiguration of this concept with each realisation (see Bakka and Karoblis 2010, 173–174). The high degree of faithful replication of the peasant or traditional dance in the performance of the *dance of the ethnographical type* supports the reconstruction of the concept of dance, as it was created in traditional culture.

How may these ethnographical-type dance communities relate to the diversity of local or regional repertoires? Given the fact that that the community does not have a local tradition to which it may lay claim, the following question is raised: what dances/dance repertoires should be adopted by a dance community? Here we may look at the problem in the logic of safeguarding, through the concept of localisation. I believe that a dance community must refolklorise a repertoire from the neighbouring locali-

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ties, viewed concentrically from the locality where the community exists. In this way, the dance community recovers heritage from the traditional local culture, contributing to the preservation (not safeguarding) of some dance concepts and zonal styles.

The museum can become involved in strengthening DETPE by offering the space for dance practice and specialised consultancy, encouraging the presence of visitors to these events. In DETPE, the intervention of museum employees must be negotiated and as minimal as possible. The DETPE can certainly operate in the ethnographic museum as a dance exhibition, but it must be clear that the object of transmission is no longer the *traditional dance* but its *copy*, even if this copy has a maximum degree of faithful replication. These "dance exhibitions" can be included, at least during the warm season, when outdoor activities are possible, in the museum's offering of activities.

Examples of Good Practice

I now refer in brief to some of my experiences as a project manager, as a president of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO)[7] with an ethnochoreological profile, and as a museographer-ethnochoreologist in an ethnographic museum.

The project *Dance Pavilion* (*Pavilionul de joc*), 2013, focused on researching traditional dances from two villages in two different areas of Transylvania and on promoting these repertoires both among the community and for visitors to the Transylvanian Museum of Ethnography (MET). Dance workshops were organised both in the researched localities (Răchiţele and Urca, Cluj County) and in the open-air ethnographic museum (see figure 1 and 2).

In 2013, we managed a much larger project dedicated mainly to the study and promotion of a dance culture in Frata commune, Cluj County. The project had two major dimensions: research into the local dance culture, and an event to promote this culture in the outdoor section of the MET. During the promotional event, visitors were able to learn to dance, become acquainted with the music of the area and taste the food prepared by the locals (figure 3).

[7] Together with Anca Giurchescu, we founded, in 2012, the Etnocor Association. Centre for Ethnochoreological Studies, an NGO whose mission is to support the research and promotion of traditional dance.

Figure 1. *Group of kindergarten children who learned to dance as part of the* Dance Pavilon *project.* Photo: © Adrian Pop.

Figure 2. *Dance moment in the National Ethnographic Park "Romulus Vuia" within the project dedicated to dance and music culture in Frata commune, Cluj county.* Photo: © George Ciupag.

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Figure 3. *Children who learned to dance in the project* Pavilionul de joc. Photo: © Petac Silvestru.

In 2017 and 2018, in the open-air ethnographic museum (outdoor section of the MET) we organised two iterations of the *Pavilionul de joc* project,[8] a project with a pronounced didactic character. The activities of teaching dances from several ethnographic areas very far from each other (therefore different movement cultures) were framed by other complementary activities that diversified the themes of knowledge. The goal was heritage education through/for dance of primary and secondary school students. Emphasis was placed on understanding the systemic relationships that exist between different components of traditional culture (between dance and music, between dance and folk costume, the role of aerophone instruments, the image of a traditional village and other such themes). The courses were held in the open-air museum households, the guides through the museum completing the information about the ICH. The dances were taught by local lecturers/bearers of *traditional dances* (see figure 4).

The *EduCoreologica* project was a large project that also developed an important scientific component, by organising, within the project, the

[8] The Romanian word *joc* derives from Latin *jocus* and denotes, in one of its main meanings, *dance*, the activity of *dancing*.

Figure 4. *Participants in the* EduCoreologica *project dancing in one of the households in the "Romulus Vuia" National Ethnographic Park in Cluj-Napoca*. Photo: © George Ciupag.

first edition of the *"Anca Giurchescu" Ethnochoreology Colloquia*. The main target groups of the project were *traditional dance* groups from nine localities throughout Romania and MET visitors. Among the goals of the project were: to promote local dance cultures, to raise awareness among young people in *traditional dance* groups on the importance of dance traditions and dance practice, and to achieve stylistic differences between the dances of different ethnographic areas.

The constants of these projects were: researching the dance culture in the localities where *traditional dance* is still danced; recording and archiving dance material, musical material and other information about choreographic and musical culture; putting *traditional dance* bearers in contact with children/young people/MET visitors; heritage education of the public; development among *dance of the ethnographical type* practitioners of knowledge and perception in line with the logic of safeguarding traditional dance; and practising dance, as a method of getting to know a local culture.

In summary, a model of good practice of *dance of the ethnographical type* in the ethnographic museum can include some ideas that derive from both

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the ethnochoreological approach to dance and from the logic of safeguarding. This means combining two key aspects: (a) a high degree of referentiality to the source dances; and (b) socialisation within the community of dance practitioners. Other aspects that matter are: (1) a resizing of the concept of localisation; and (2) an inhibition of the concept of nationalisation of the repertoire; (3) good documentation of the dances they practise; (4) an ethnochoreological understanding of the processes of dance creation and transmission; (5) close contact with *traditional dance* bearers; (6) good interactivity between dancers and musicians (very important in the process of performing the dance); (7) creating an emotional environment that is open to learning; (8) and finally, freedom granted to museum visitors so that they can experience cultural diversity through their own bodies and minds.

Conclusions

Undoubtedly, UNESCO's policy on ICH is a big step forward towards boosting the perpetuation of *traditional dance* for as long as possible. It is a radical change which, however, at least in Romania, has produced few effects. Legislative blockages and superficialities; cross-references and uncertainties of institutions' responsibilities regarding ICH; an outdated legislation with respect to the safeguarding framework and the lack of enforcement rules; the habitus of the majority and the strong establishment of dance as folklorism; the lack of ethnological and heritage education of both the population (already mostly urban) and some decision-makers; increasingly accelerated modernisation and depopulation of villages; and the lack of a Romanian university specialisation in ethnochoreology are just a few of the aspects that make me sceptical about two aspects: (a) namely that, in the long term, *traditional dance* and traditional dance practices will resist the pressure of modernisation and (b) that the paradigm of safeguarding can help rebalance the scale given the weight of the spectacular model within folklorism.

So far, there has not been a critical point that would make me optimistic. Safeguarding is not assimilated at the level of the cultural and educational system and is not very well known in those communities where it would greatly matter. The spectacular model in folklorism remains pervasive and puts immense pressure on alternative modes of promotion (dance practice events). It consumes resources that could be channelled towards safeguarding actions.

As far as the ethnographic museum is concerned, the necessary change needs to be singular: a new unitary perspective on both material and intangible cultural heritage, organically harmonised and adequately legislated, through intertwining the model of conservation with that of safeguarding.

The analysis above has aimed to shed light on some aspects that concern *traditional dance* and *dance of the ethnographical type*. Dance is one of the most cherished activities through which tradition can be experienced and constructed. The stabilisation of dance practice events in the offering of ethnographic museums would bring social, cultural, economic benefits both to dance communities and to the urban community in the broadest sense. Dance practice communities, especially within dance schools, are a sign that, in a market economy, dance can live a second life in the form of *dance of the ethnographical type* with as much referentiality as possible. This saves dance forms that are of crucial importance for the history of culture, for the history of dance and for education.

I have emphasised, I think quite forcefully, that staged folklorism is a path that tends to kill traditional dance and inhibits safeguarding. The model of dance staging in folklorism has proven to be a poisoned apple for dance traditions in bearer communities. My opinion is that at the base of this situation is found, within the modernity-tradition dialectic, only the repudiation of the elements of tradition and not their acceptance in specific forms. Modern people wish to dance, but without making the effort of documenting and without making the effort to recover forms and styles (representations of traditional culture).

Safeguarding, however, is built on a different logic: that of reconciliation with tradition and acceptance of tradition, as its bearers consider it to be. It promises a radical change that, however, at least in Romania, has produced few effects. Unlike the stage model of folklorism, the *dance of the ethnographical type* practice event (which also belongs to folklorism and heritage making process), even if it does not include acts of safeguarding, employs a logic of safeguarding. This alternative face of folklorism (a meta-cultural phenomenon, typical of modernity, as well as safeguarding and heritage-making, the constitution of tradition) can recover from traditional culture the concepts of dance, movement models, and stylistics and resemantise them through acts of socialisation.

As long as this mechanism of repudiation of tradition, typical of modernity (Patapievici 2020) is alone at the basis of our relationship with tradition, the elements of traditional culture will disappear. Let us not for-

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get: tradition, like heritage construction, consists of symbolic processes through which the past is constructed in the present and from the perspective (theoretical, ideological and the like) of the present.

It is therefore within the power of those who enact and construct tradition to do so in a way that is convergent with modernity, to know *what* and *how* to choose so that modern representations interpret past representations in a convergent, rather than divergent, manner. This chapter indicates, I think substantially, what exactly we should look at and what content should be chosen in this process of constitution of tradition and heritage. For this, the ethnography of dance, its ethnology and anthropology are the solutions. *Dance of the ethnographical type* is a possible path to tradition and its source, in the case of traditional Romanian dance, namely peasant dance.

I conclude with a quote that, in its letter and spirit, summarises my position as a museographer-ethnochoreologist involved in safeguarding *traditional dance*:

> Modernity is disastrous when it seeks to fully replace tradition and is remarkable when it seeks to achieve it by other, more unprejudiced means. When she is jealous of tradition, and puts her jealousy into practice, modernity quickly turns into a nightmare. When it forgets that it is not an end and makes its genius available as a means to noble ends that go beyond it, then modernity reveals its own goodness, which is by no means negligible. The proper genius of modernity is to serve what is high and does not belong to it. And what is high, only tradition can say. (Patapievici 2020: 179)

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