

FOLKLORE, ETHNOLOGY AND BEYOND, FROM THE 14TH SIEF CONGRESS IN SANTIAGO DE COMPOSTELA

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Abstract: The article focuses on the main trends in development of ethnology, folklore and cultural anthropology as represented at the 14th congress of International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF). The Congress' main theme *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* attracted scholars of many adjacent disciplines like sociology, history, economics and politics. The modern turn from rural studies and folklore genres towards gender, body, migration, identity investigations is typical to most scholars all over the world. Still, the traditional culture, its structure and language serve as the grounding for the newly appearing rituals and texts, they are in the core of the fundamental research. The Congress exhibited various forms of academic activity, such as key lectures, presentations in thematic panels or round tables, video-club, meetings of the working groups and prize awards. Young scholars are very welcome at this event where they can

learn methodology and history of the fields, take part in the competitions, present their own research.

Keywords: ethnology, folklore, pilgrimage, post-socialist studies, ritual year, SIEF

On April 14–17, 2019, in Santiago de Compostela (Spain), the 14th Congress of the International Society for Ethnology and Folklore (SIEF) under the general title *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* took place.¹

The prestigious academic name of SIEF and the topical main theme of the 14th Congress attracted hundreds of scholars from all over the world. The location of the event, Santiago de Compostela, the capital of the autonomous community of Galicia in northwestern Spain and the destination of the Camino de Santiago (Way of St. James), one of the most important pilgrimage routes from medieval times till now, added to the scholars' willingness to participate. As the organizers noted, "there could be no better place than Santiago de Compostela to host a conference for those well versed in the science and art of observing and analyzing human tracks – ethnologists, folklorists, anthropologists, and other trackers of culture. The congress' theme *Track Changes: Reflecting on a Transforming World* drew upon both the ethnological explorations of human life and its continual change as well as the transforming, yet constant, Camino."

Though the SIEF is designed as an organization which unites folklorists and ethnologists, for many years it has gone far beyond these two disciplines. The complex investigation of the development of the disciplines promotes interdisciplinary studies, and supports the newly appearing fields of research, methodologies, theories, data (all these are growing in numbers and volume), networks, technologies and platforms, all of which are integrated in the core of the SIEF congress biannual programs. The Congress topic embraced all the sides of a human being and his or her premises, aligning with the major topic, and tracking the changes in the field.

Another typical feature of the SIEF activities, and correspondingly of the Congresses, is its growing attention towards the young generations. Among the participants there are many postgraduates, postdocs and early career scholars, who are mentored and given advice, present posters, and compete for the Young Scholar SIEF prize. They participate in the SIEF Working group (SIEF WG) created recently specifically for early career scholars. SIEF congresses now

exemplify the various ways in which the developing human and social sciences can provide opportunities to researchers at all stages of their careers, to support exchanging their knowledge and experience without any borders or restrictions.

The Congress's program was huge and consisted of over one hundred panels, each panel including from 6 to 8 papers (<https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2019/index.shtml>). Apart from panels there were poster sessions, a documentary festival, book exhibitions, and meetings of the Working groups. There are 14 WGs nowadays, and they cover many fields of research, such as Ethnology of Religion, The Ritual Year, Food Research, Migration and Mobility; some of them specialize on methods and data – Digital Ethnology and Folklore, Historical Approach in Cultural Analysis, or institutions – Archives, Museums and Material Culture. There are also WGs organized around national traditions studies – for example, Francophones and others (<https://www.siefhome.org/wg.shtml>).



Figure 1. Opening of the 14th SIEF Congress. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

The program included a key lecture every day. The opening ceremony started with the talk “The politics of evidence in an uncertain world: experience, knowledge, social facts and factual truth” delivered by the social anthropologist Suzanna Narotzky (Barcelona, Spain). Her primary focus was to analyze the category of evidence and the main types of knowledge, so as to unravel the process of valuation and the true concepts.

On the second day, the participants were invited by Tim Ingold to reflex on “Strike-through and wipe-out: tactics for overwriting the past” (Aberdeen, Scotland). The speaker’s current research is situated at the interface between anthropology, archaeology, art, and architecture. He dwelled on the practices of remembering and wiping out the past, which results in a present picture of the past looking like a palimpsest. The category of memory, commemoration in the context of history, and its newest re-writing in some (we would say many) countries is more than topical now. History and politics are often linked.

Finally, the third keynote was dedicated to “Digital footprints and narrative traceability” presented by Copp lie Cocq (Helsinki, Finland) who questioned and deconstructed the novelty of narratives and the methodology of studying them in the digital era. The purpose of her lecture was to reflect on how much we use online practices and data in our research, and whether we can get on without traditional methodological approaches. The scholar comes to the conclusion, that the traditional methods are still valuable and cannot be totally replaced by the new ones. This provided another example that old models are always rooted in the very depth of the most innovative, and current, practices. These ideas were developed and supported in many papers and discussions throughout the Congress.

A special session, “Track Changes in Galician Ethnology / Anthropology”, shed light on Galician ethnology and the history of the science locally. This was an inspiring meeting which showed the stages in the studies of the mostly fishing folk culture of Galicia and correspondingly of the initial predominance of this ‘fishing’ theme in the field of Galician ethnology. During the last decades, there have been many changes in the local investigations; now, new topics are under consideration, and there are young promising scholars, among whom – in contrast to the predominance of male academic presence – there are many women. These studies are connected with practical usage of the ideas of applied anthropology – commercial tourism, souvenirs, restaurants are growing in scale and provide opportunities for new data, while still using

the traditional knowledge. Thus, in Galicia, as in many other loci, the role of applied anthropology is growing.

On the whole, all the panels, roundtables, and workshops, were divided into thematic streams, including such fields as Age (4 panels), Archives and museums (5), Audio-visual (1), Body (6), Digital (4), Disciplinary and methodology discussions (14), Economy and work (5), Environment (6), Gender (3), Heritage (6), Life (8), Health and Medicine (4), Migration and borders (6), Narratives (5), Politics and Social (4), Posters (12), Religion and rituals (6), Rural (3), Sui Generis (3). The array of topics embraced all the spheres of human activities, environmental, economic, and ideological issues, as well as methodology and history of the disciplines.

With such a full program, so many parallel sessions, as well as other academic and cultural events, it was impossible to follow the whole program. We will characterize the panels we participated in and will give a general overview of the Congress with analysis of random papers.

From the Program one can see that folklore and ethnology as such were not presented as separate streams. At SIEF Congresses, these fields are touched upon in discussions on smaller or marginal themes which are relevant for these big traditional fields. We can confidently argue that the interest in archaic practices, rituals, and texts is not predominant for SIEF members from many countries. Folklore remains the major topic in the program of conferences of other academic organizations such as the International Society for Folk Narrative Research (ISFNR, <http://www.isfnr.org/>). Of course, some papers in Santiago did mention folklore genres and oral texts, but they were used as a basis for other thematical or methodological analyses. For example, at the panel “Body, affect, senses and emotion: fields and perspectives” [SIEF Working Group on Body, Affects, Senses, and Emotions (BASE)] Tuukka Karlsson (Helsinki, Finland) delivered the paper “The semiotic register in Kalevala-meter incantations: the ontological question of emotions” which at first glance appears to allude to folklore. The author studied the presence of emotions in Kalevala-meter incantation performances with the help of a new theoretical framework through a new methodology that combines linguistic anthropological theories of semiotic registers (Agha 2007), stance taking (Du Bois 2007), and voice (Keane 1999). This methodology allows the scholar to reconstruct the extralinguistic data which is not present in the text of the epos.



Figure 2. Meeting of the Chairs of the SIEF Working Groups. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

As far as ethnology and traditional rural studies are concerned, the situation is similar to that of folklore studies. There are countries where field research and investigations into traditional rural culture are still well preserved (mostly Eastern and Central European countries), but they are not many. At the 12th SIEF Congress in 2015 in Zagreb (in Croatia and neighbouring countries traditional ethnography is still well developed), there were many ethnographic papers.² In Santiago de Compostela the block “Rural” included three panels: “Entangled countryside – tracking political negotiations and transformations of the rural”, “Tracking changes in the mountains: imaginaries, mobilities, narratives”, and “Transforming transhumance pastoralism, ‘heritagization’ and new rural economies”. It is obvious that the interest towards mostly political and economic problems, such as migration, identity, gender, body, and values prevails. Even if the investigation is based on rural context, the focus is different. For example, Elisabeth Wollin Elhouar (Stockholm, Sweden), in her paper “Politics of space and belonging in rural Sweden,” spoke on the significant transformation of the rural space, and of the urge for a new politics towards refugees coming to the



Figure 3. The SIEF WG “The Ritual Year” panel. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

country. The speaker has collected materials from two small municipalities, in Södermanland county and Uppland county. According to the interviews, the policy against taking refugees is often opposite if compared with the capability and mood of the provincial people toward the “new citizens”.

Considerably more attention was paid to the history and methodology of the fields of folklore and ethnology. A round table “Tracing/tracking/transforming histories of the ethnology/folklore: toward critical methodology”, with convenors Hande Birkalan-Gedik (Münster, Germany) and Ingrid Slavec Gradišnik (Ljubljana, Slovenia), and three discussants Laurent S. Fournier (Marseille, France), Peter Jan Margry (Amsterdam, The Netherlands), Patrick Laviolette (Leicester, UK) and Klaus Schönberg (Klagenfurt, Austria) attracted a large audience. The round table was aimed at challenging uncritical, evolutionary disciplinary histories vis à vis the histories with novel approaches, which go beyond the conventional ones. The seven papers read at this panel took us to various countries and research objects: the history of the discipline in Spain and in Czech republic, “anthropology of home” as founded by Raymond Firth



Figure 4. Round Table “Tracing/tracking/transforming histories of the ethnology/folklore: toward critical methodology”. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

who had done research among the Maori, ethnographic value of Portuguese paintings, autobiography as a genre, Slovenian-German bilingualism and its influence on the development on musical folklore, apprehension of folk-music collection in Iceland, and, finally, a detailed presentation of B. Malinowski’s contribution to the disciplines. All these provoked a fruitful discussion, the main ideas of which confirmed the thesis by Coppélie Cocq: the traditional field research cannot be replaced by digital investigations; archives and collections are still a must and a base for any ethnologic or folklore study; all the innovative means for collecting and analyzing data have to serve as an addition to the traditional methods.

The panel “Tracking the ritual year on the move in different cultural settings and systems of values” was organized by SIEF Working group (WG) on the Ritual Year with two convenors, co-chairs of the SIEF WG “The Ritual Year” Laurent S. Fournier (Marseille, France) and Irina Sedakova (Moscow, Russia) Some of the papers delivered at this panel are presented in this issue (Žilvytis

Šaknys, Rasa Paukštytė-Šaknienė, Tatyana Mikhailova, Alexander Novik, Mare Kõiva), so we will review just those which are not included here.

Irina Sedakova in her paper “Bulgarian (Balkan) winter calendric ritual meals: dynamics of symbolism and values” drew attention to the archaic winter customs (Christmas, New Year, Epiphany) as they are depicted in the published data and archives of 19th–20th cc. Special ceremonial bread symbolically combines veneration of the Virgin Mary and Jesus Christ, Nativity, God, but, also, depending on the region (in the North-West of Bulgaria, parts of Serbia), it is dedicated to pre-Christian gods and aim at good crops, fertility of cattle, and people’s well-being. These ritual complexes are still popular, but in a modified form, in the cities. Now the ritual loaves and the festive meal are seen as family or community entertainment, as cultural heritage and memorial practice, as an issue of national identification, touristic attraction and local branding. The discussion brought in some parallels of the transformation in the traditional holiday meals in other European countries, partly because of the trend towards vegetarianism, healthy food, and restrictions on eating bread. It is seen as a conflict between generations, when grandmothers want to make their grandchildren eat traditional “unhealthy” calories – rich food such as pork and bread, and the youngsters protest against it.

Mare Kõiva (Tartu, Estonia) spoke on the “Changes in calendar holidays in 1992–2018 (Estonia)”. This paper was slightly different from the one she published in this issue (with Kristina Muhi as a co-author). The scholar has tracked the modifications in the systems of holidays from 1918 up to the present day. The speaker was asked about the role of, and attitudes towards, the official holidays during the Soviet times in Estonia. There was no affection towards the socialist holidays in general, but some dates in the ritual calendar, such as March the 8th the International Women’s Day was, and still is, popular, specified the speaker. This statement was supported by scholars from Lithuania and Latvia, where this date was popular, too, and even now retains some form of celebrations.

Ilze Boldāne-Zeļenkova (Riga, Latvia) in her paper “Replacing traditions: a case of Latvian SSR” reflected on the festivals, introduced to Latvia in the period of 1940–1991 years, as a means of legitimizing the Soviet ideology. Similar to the processes described by the previous speaker, the establishment and introduction of the new traditions took more than a decade of experimenting with the form and content of them, as well as trying to eradicate religious

rituals from the daily life of inhabitants living in this country. The scholar made a detailed analysis, using documents and correspondence, revealing the decree of the Council of Ministers on the implementation of the improvement measures in the invention of Soviet traditions. The presentation was supported by visual materials, such as photographs, mass-media descriptions of events, calendars, etc. In the discussion following, one question dominated: whether the Russians in Latvia accepted the new ritual year quicker than the Latvians. This question is also valid for other former Soviet republics where Russians live. This is a typological problem and it should be investigated as a special issue – this was the general conclusion.

Aado Lintrop (Tartu, Estonia) named his paper “About two Seto holidays held in August each year”. A prominent expert on traditions of Setos, who are an ethnic and linguistic minority in south-eastern Estonia and north-western Russia, mostly Orthodox Christians, Lintrop started with the analysis of a new Seto festival. It is the First Seto Kingdom Day, which has been celebrated since 1994. The idea was borrowed from Norway, where descendants of 17th Century Finnish immigrants each year proclaim their Republic. The old history of the Seto Kingdom is based on the Seto epic “Peko”, created by traditional singer Anne Vabarna in 1927. On the request of a scholar she then made the old Seto god of fertility, Peko, a human being and king of Setos. Peko’s remains are buried in a cave near the Russian Orthodox Pskovo-Pechersky Monastery. Thus the connection with the Church festival of Dormition of the Mother of God (August 28th, old style) arises. Before the introduction of Seto Kingdom Day, the Dormition was for Setos just a Church holiday. Now it is mentally connected with the Kingdom Day due to the legend of king Peko, including veneration of the objects devoted to him. A day before Dormition, the abbot of the monastery has an official meeting with the Seto delegation (the regent included). From 2008, in the village Sigovo of Pechery region, on the evening of Dormition a festival is held that is named Family Meetings, visited by large numbers of Estonian Setos. Kingdom Day is now the central event of the Seto ritual year; the regent has become the leader of the Setos. The discussion was around the huge content and activity development of a modern festival, which is linked to the “roots” of the Setos and meanwhile is also associated with a big Christian Orthodox holiday. The role of the family is significant for the expansion of this minority’s fest, which was underlined by many scholars.

Irina Stahl (Bucharest, Romania) presented part of her project “A saints’ trek from Greece to Romania: The rise and spread of Saint Nektarios’ cult”, in which she traced the fast spread of Saint Nektarios’ cult in Romania after 2002. This was the year when a fragment of the relics of the healing saint from the Greek island of Aegina were brought to the prior of Radu Vodă Monastery in Bucharest. The researcher based her study on the data of the field work, interviews, and investigation of unpublished testimonies. She compared the pilgrimages to St. Nectarius’ sanctum in Aegina and Bucharest with special attention to healing rituals and their presumed efficacy. In 2018, in Bucharest the members of the 13th Ritual Year conference held and organized by Irina Stahl, participated in a pilgrimage and veneration of the saint and had the opportunity to interview one of the monks (Sedakova & Novik & Dugushina 2019).

Moving to other topics discussed at the Congress we should note that during the last decades, special interest has developed on the digital technologies in the investigation of new folklore texts, innovative forms of communication, etc. The paper delivered by Petra Schmidt (Munich, Germany) “(Self-)Representation in mom-lifestyle blogs” read at the panel “Changing features? Performing the self in digital culture” [SIEF WG Digital Ethnology and Folklore] was devoted to the analysis of *Berlin mom lifestyle blog*. It is a media and image analytical group correspondence, which investigates manners of representation of motherhood in context of an increasing social demand for creativity and lifestyle as work. The authors’ views on representation of motherhood in Berlin are similar to the conclusions of other scholars who study maternity blogs (Dugushina 2016: 276–278). Needless to say that maternity and children should always be in the center of academic ethnological and folklore research, whatever material and methodologies are used.³

One of the most discussed papers was that of Anna Fedele (Lisbon, Portugal) “Embodying migrating identities through pilgrimage: anthropological explorations of Portuguese migrants’ experiences in Fatima” read at the panel “Embodying social and political transformations in borderlands: anthropological analyses”. The author presented her long-term study of the phenomenon of the religious trips to Fatima, the famous religious location for pilgrimage. For every religious Portuguese a visit to Fatima at least once in his/her life is obligatorily.⁴ Due to the political, economic, and other reasons, millions of Portuguese emigrated and live in other European countries, Brazil, and the USA. According to the statistics, 20% of the Portuguese live in the diaspora;

their children were brought up away from the ancestral homeland. Often this generation does not speak Portuguese, but still, veneration of Fatima is an important part of the education (“equal to the passion for football and fado”, as the scholar argues), a significant feature of the Portuguese identity. This has led to the fact that those 20 to 30 year old Portuguese born in France or Switzerland or other countries, come to their parents’ motherland to make a pilgrimage to Fatima, to fulfil their promise. It does not resemble a serious religious pilgrimage, but rather looks more like a tourist trip. This type of visiting program is supported by the locals: there are special food-places which meet the demands of such pilgrims, hotels and disco-bars. During the discussion, many scholars gave examples of the transformation of the religious trips into entertaining tours with veneration of the saints and churches as points on the itinerary, but not the main focus.⁵

In the same panel, Elisabeth Tauber (Bolzano, Italy) read the paper “Ethnographic explorations of the wolf crossing the linguistic border of the Trentino-South Tyrol (Italy)”. The topical theme of the border is being studied by anthropologists, linguists, and other scholars since it has language, ethnic, cultural, and political dimensions. The scholar investigated two villages in one of the regions of Northern Italy, where there are German-Italian border passes, working with many interlocutors. According to the tradition, in the houses the sons (brothers) stay to live while the daughters (sisters) get married in other villages. The sons take the wives from other villages, where the other language may be spoken, and together with the brides the foreign language idioms mix up with the local ones. Linguistic border is not that strict anymore due to the permanent migration, the going back and forth. Not only the linguistic situation changes, but also the types of gardens, food habits, and households. Migration brings over innovations and changes the borders (cp.: Silverstein 2003: 193–229; Singer 2018: 83–90).⁶ This paper was vigorously discussed, many other interesting and funny examples of language and rites shifting around a border followed.

The presentation by Anna-Karina Hermkens (Sidney, Australia) “Transnational community ritual in PNG-Australian diaspora communities: the case of the Blessed Peter To Rot” was also vividly debated. The scholar from Sidney discussed the transfer of the ritual practices from Papua New Guinea to Australia. The majority of the inhabitants of PNG are Catholics. They are relocating Catholic shrines and ritual celebrations to Australia in order to celebrate their National Patron Saint Peter To Rot (1912–1945), a catholic priest who sup-

ported Papua during the World War 2 and was murdered by a maniac. Peter To Rot is venerated in PNG and in migration, where the migrants bring over his cult. Veneration of the saint in Australia and in PNG includes pilgrimages to sites and shrines dedicated to the Blessed Peter To Rot and are very popular. In Australia, this cult is supported by gay people, who celebrated their wedding in the Peter To Rot shrine. So, the cult is assimilated and transformed according to the local needs, which is frequently the case with “imported” saints.

Several panels reflected on the Holocaust; some of them were focused on the Polish case, including the paper by Piotr Grochowski (Krakow, Poland) “Hidden narratives and their social functions. What and why Polish peasants (do not) talk about the Holocaust”, read at the panel “Widening the focus on narratives [SIEF Working group on Narratives founding panel]”, treated the attitudes to the problem by the Poles. The catastrophe is openly discussed, but what is rarely spoken about is the participation of the Poles in the prosecution of the Jews. There are many disputes around the Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw. The museum is located in a spacious house, uses all the new multi-media technologies, and is very logically organized. On the other hand, many scholars insist on one-way ideology, which is debated at several museums in many countries.⁷

Gender topics are an imperative part of the Congress’ scientific program. The block “Gender” in Santiago de Compostela consisted of three panels: “Into a trans-forming world: exploring genders and postgenders [SIEF Working Group on Body, Affects, Senses, and Emotions (BASE)]”, “New Gender dynamics? Instrumentalization of gender in European neo-national and right wing movements”, and “Men’s commitment in long term care: changes in kinship and gender?” Another topic connected with gender centers on the investigations of LGBTQ-communities in different countries. In 2015, in Zagreb at the 12th SIEF Congress, there was a big panel “Queer ethnographies of the 21st century: heritages, realities, and perspectives”, but in Santiago there was not a special panel. Still, several papers on LGBTQ were delivered and the audience was quite representative. The paper by Cory Thorne (Newfoundland) “Hidden thoughts and exposed bodies: negotiating ethics and representation of Cuban masculinities and sexualities” drew the attention of many scholars. Cory Thorne together with Meltem Turkoz (Turkey) organized the panel “Art, artists, and social justice in folklore and ethnography”. In the paper based on long-term field research in the Caribbean archipelago, C. Thorne shed light on the presentation of masculinity

and sexuality in the paintings by modern Cuba painters, who work with acrylic on canvas. After many decades of isolation from the Western world, Cuba has become more open to American and European tourists. Many people visit the Island of Freedom as sex-tourists, because of accessibility and inexpensiveness of intimate services. A certain niche is occupied by gay tourists. They are the target audience of the young artists who are trying to demonstrate the appeal of masculinity and men's bodies – their own or their friends. As an illustration, one painting by George Michel Milian Maura “Testosteromania” (2012) was presented, and it provoked a vivid discussion. The results of the exchange of opinions on the art which seemed to everybody rather depressive is the following: 1) masculinity can be transformed into femininity, 2) the willingness to be young looks like a manifestation of femininity. The discussants argued that perceptions of masculinity, sexuality, and morality in different societies must be studied from different points of view.

A vast and vibrant topic of the SIEF congresses is always the reminiscence and reflections of the socialist past. The panel “Current Images of Socialism” with three convenors from the former “socialist camp” Lubica Volanska (Bratislava, Slovakia), Kirsti Jõesalu (Tartu, Estonia), and Jana Nosková (Praha, Czech Republic) gathered many scholars who delivered 10 papers in two sessions with a fruitful discussion at the end. The aim of the panel was to reflect on the current representations/images of socialism, as communicated by the generation of witnesses and transmitted to the younger generations. The very scholars who study socialism as a recent past period are from different generations: for some of them this is the time when they lived and worked. Others were born after the decay of the socialist system. This seems a very important distinction of how the epoch is seen and depicted. The presentations covered, mostly, everyday life and the socialist attitudes towards food and food ways, public canteens, rented or bought apartments. The paper “Family photographs as a means of remembering the past” read by Jana Nosková presented a project which took place in several Czech cities, when children had to choose three photos from the family album and to describe them. The analysis of the choice and stories proved the importance of such a program which allows the transmission of important knowledge of the Soviet period – joyful facts like festivals and leisure time, and sorrowful ones such as work camps and war episodes. Another project “Girls and women in Slovakia and Hungary (1955–1989). An Ethnological approach” is being carried out by Marta Botikova (Bratislava, Slovakia) and Zita

Figure 5. Procession “The Entry of Our Lord to Jerusalem”. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.



Deáky (Budapest, Hungary). The idea of the authors is to represent everyday life in socialist Slovakia and Hungary from women’s perspectives. They use their own autobiographic data, interviews, and evidence from printed and archival materials as well. Interestingly, in this panel there wasn’t a single scholar from Russia; there were only Estonians from the former USSR and researchers from Hungary and former Czechoslovakia. This fact was noticed in the discussion, and it was commented that the countries mentioned were more “western” compared to other republics of the USSR or socialist countries, and they had a better economic system, and the people suffered fewer shortages. So, the situation in each socialist country, and even in each city, was very different.

Apart from papers, discussions, film-shows and other academic and artistic activities, many organizational meetings aimed at getting the international scholars together and motivating the work in the field were held during the



Figure 6. The parishioners and pilgrims with olive branches. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

Congress. The leaders of the Working groups discussed the previous two years and the plans for the next two years; each WG held its own meeting, highlighting the main events before and after the Congress. The coordination meeting of university department representatives focused on collaboration and exchange programs between the universities, on folklore and ethnology, while the coordination meeting of journal editors aimed at promoting collaboration between journals and the discussion of the topical issues of the publication.

The Young Scholar Prize for the paper “The Concealed Revealed ‘The Afterlives’ of hidden objects in the home” was awarded to Cery Houlbrook (Hertfordshire, UK). The topic of the objects and their role in people’s memory and family narratives was in the center of the closing event – the round table “The materiality of transformations: Listening to the objects” run by Regina Bendix, Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Dorothy Noyes, and Sharon Roseman.

Figure 7. Palm Sunday and Easter ritual cakes. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.



This event looked like a performance with some features of storytelling: the participants had to describe an object from their home and to track the transformation of the attitude towards it. The narratives were very emotional and showed another prospective, and possible, area of ethnographic study.

The Congress took place during the week of St. Lazar and Palm week, so the participants had plenty of opportunities to watch the picturesque Christian activity in the city, such as colorful ceremonies and dramatic processions with prayers and music.

The 15th Congress will take place in 2021, June 21–24, hosted by the University of Helsinki (Finland) under the general title “Breaking the rules? Power, participation, transgression”. We anticipate that it will be a fascinating scholarly event, with many interesting activities around it, since it will be held around the time of the Midsummer festival, so rich with rituals and celebrations.



Figure 8. A back-pack of a pilgrim. Photo by Irina Sedakova 2018, private archives.

Notes

- 1 See the site of the Congress <https://www.siefhome.org/congresses/sief2019/index.html>.
- 2 In the previous 12th congresses in 2015 in Zagreb the panel “Ethnography of rural spaces: between utopia and neoliberalism”, was one of the most visited (Vlaskina et. al. 2015: 251–273).
- 3 A special issue, Vol. 80, of *Folklore: Electronic Journal of Folklore* with childhood and maternity as major themes will appear in 2020.
- 4 In 2011 at the 10th SIEF congress which took place in Lisbon, the participants had the wonderful opportunity to visit Fatima.

5 Same types of semi-religious semi-entertaining tours are described in the article by Tanya Matanova published in this issue.

6 This topic is very popular now in the academic world. Just to mention that parallel to the SIEF Congress (April 15–17, 2019) in Lyon, France, there was the 12th Conference on small-scale multilingualism. Similar topics have been discussed there (Pierpaolo Di Carlo and Jeff Good (University at Buffalo, The State University of New York) “Indexical order, identity targets, and the typology of multilingualism”, Friederike Lüpke “A staged communicative event in Agnack (Lower Casamence, Senegal)” and others).

7 Such a discussion under the title “Jewish Diasporas in Europe and Beyond: Fieldwork and Source Studies” was organized by the Department of European Studies at Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (Kunstkamera) of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Saint-Petersburg, November 6–8, 2017).

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