

# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

## CULTURAL HERITAGE IN MIGRATION

15-16 June 2017

Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with Ethnographic Museum, Bulgarian Academy of Sciences

Sofia, Bulgaria

Alongside the issues related to migration policies, immigrants' sociocultural adaptation and the functioning of immigrant networks in the receiving society, the intensive migration processes in the past three decades from Eastern Europe to West European countries and the United States pose in new perspective the topic of cultural heritage abroad, of its construction and maintenance in foreign cultural environments. Carried by the immigrants outside their homelands, this heritage is reconstructed in a specific way in the conditions of immigration and is a major factor in the formation and consolidation of immigrant communities. Depending on the time and circumstances of migration and on the immigrants generational affiliation, the introduction and acquisition of 'native' culture can begin already in the country of origin (through the family, school, media, etc.), but can also take place abroad – in family settings, in the communication with co-nationals inside the immigrants' networks, through the contacts maintained in the home country or in relation to the work of institutions, such as schools, churches, cultural associations abroad, etc. In the process of acquiring 'native' culture and establishing sites and institutions for this acculturation, immigrant communities pass through different forms and levels of consolidation, interacting with the cultural heritage brought in the new environment, as well as influencing upon it depending on the specific needs and sociocultural dynamics of the community. Immigrants not only use cultural heritage in their integration and consolidation (group or personal) strategies, but they also preserve in a particular way a range of important elements of the national culture – language, customs, beliefs, celebrations, folklore texts, etc. The latter play the role of core points in the individual and group identity of immigrants in the foreign environment, they are shared and pointed out in different contexts and are an object of maintenance and promotion through various community activities, media and social networks.

The current conference aims to outline some of the specific aspects of cultural heritage in migration, interpreting it from the perspective of its significance for maintaining immigrants' cultural identity in a foreign setting and its role in the processes of consolidation and institutionalization of immigrant communities. Dwelling mainly on examples related to the experience of Bulgarian communities abroad, the conference is open also for papers related to the role of cultural heritage among immigrant communities from other countries of Central and Eastern Europe. With this conference, we would like to invite scholars from different scholarly disciplines interested in themes including (but not limited to):

- Cultural heritage from the viewpoint of immigrant communities and their consolidation, and the role of heritage in the consolidation of immigrant communities (as well as integration and identification among other immigrant communities in the host environment);
- Forms of ‘importing,’ construing, ‘fighting for,’ valorizing, preserving, maintaining and use of cultural heritage among and by immigrant communities;
- Institutions and informal associations of immigrants for construing, safeguarding and use of cultural heritage in the receiving society, as well as in the home country;
- Cultural heritage as a social capital from the viewpoint of institutions, the networks and the individual social strategies (including traditional professions, business initiatives related to heritage, etc.);
- Trends in construing new European forms of heritage based on migrations and EU policies, multiculturalism as an official policy and the ‘undesirable heritage’ as a strategy of distinguishing in a sociocultural perspective;
- The establishment of institutions (churches, church communities, cultural and educational associations, schools, museums, etc.) and the integration of immigrants to already existing institutions (e.g. cultural institutes, embassies, churches, etc.) – in historical and present-day perspectives;
- The interactions between institution-community-heritage; the role of different institutions of immigrant communities (schools, churches, associations, etc.);
- The social (real and virtual) networks as a factor for the consolidation of the immigrant communities and in the cultural heritage construction and preservation;
- The family as the main and natural environment for transmission of cultural heritage in the process of informal education in culture, customs, language, religion, name system, family narratives, everyday objects, imagery, calendar, etc.;
- The formal and informal consolidation as a nostalgic gesture and cultural need, as an integration strategy and social activity.

Working language: English

There is no fee for participation in the conference, but the organizers do not have the possibility to cover the participants’ expenses for travel and accommodation.

Please, send your paper submissions until **31 March 2017** to email: [conference@migrantheritage.com](mailto:conference@migrantheritage.com). The submission should include your names and institutional affiliation, paper title and a short abstract (up to 200 words). The organizers will send the information about the selected participants by 10 April 2017. A volume including articles based on the presented papers will be published by the end of 2017.

#### Conference team:

Associate Professor Ph.D. Nikolai Vukov (coordinator)

Dr. Mariyanka Borisova

Dr. Tanya Matanova

Dr. Yana Gergova

Ph.D. student Valentin Voskresenski