



# Intangible Culture as Heritage: The *Lindō* – *Kolo* Dance, from the Dubrovnik Littoral

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## Author's Note (October 2015)

The first version of the text was written in the Croatian language as an expanded report at the International Interdisciplinary Scholarly Conference in Dubrovnik (Zebec 2013). It provided an opportunity for the local public in the Dubrovnik area to become better acquainted with the issues associated with registration of cultural properties at the national level as well as within international frameworks.

The city of Dubrovnik was inscribed on UNESCO's List of World Heritage, while the Festivity of Saint Blaise [*Vlaho*], the patron saint of Dubrovnik and the broader area of the historical Republic of Dubrovnik, was inscribed on the Representative List of the Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The traditional *lindō* – the *kolo* dance of the Dubrovnik Littoral [*Primorje*] – from the immediate surroundings of the City of Dubrovnik, is a specific traditional dance for which the city is recognised worldwide. The city Folklore Ensemble Lindō took its name from the dance *lindō* when it was founded in 1964 and performs stylised, authored choreographies of Croatian folklore dances as well as songs. In the City's older tradition, the *lindō* was performed only when the Littoral villagers, whose tradition it belonged to, came into the city for celebrations, mainly for the festival of St Blaise.

More attention came to be paid by the Croatian public to intangible culture when further was learned from the media about the success of inscription on UNESCO's list of its cultural properties and implementation of its *Convention*. Since then, several critical scholarly texts devoted to this issue have been published (Ceribašić 2009; Zebec 2013a). In this area, Dubrovnik was more intensively engaged than other Croatian cities since it became a member of the international non-governmental organisation Inter-City Intangible Cultural Cooperation Network (ICCN) with its seat in the Republic of Korea. During 2013, Dubrovnik hosted the international conference of the organisation (with workshops, a festival and youth forum). On this occasion, the performance with the highest number of *lindo* participants ever (234 of them) took place on the Stradun – the main street in Dubrovnik – and the event was nominated for registration in the Guinness Book of Records (*Večernji list* newspaper 2013). The backdrop to this undertaking was the efforts of the *lindo* performers, standard-bearers of the tradition from various villages in the surroundings of Dubrovnik and from the city itself, to come together with the same objective: to perform the *lindo*.

## Abstract

In 2009 Croatia inscribed seven elements of intangible heritage on UNESCO's Representative List of the *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*, even though there were a couple of earlier attempts for the Proclamations of Masterpieces. There are now thirteen inscriptions on UNESCO's lists, and implementation and additions or changes in criteria are carefully followed with intent to continue the nomination process. Experts – ethnologists, folklorists, philologists, ethnomusicologists and ethnochoreologists, and associates of scientific research centres, universities, and museums – work as members of the National Commission for Intangible Cultural Heritage under the Ministry of Culture. Presently, over a hundred examples have been inscribed into the Register of Cultural Properties of the Republic of Croatia. *Lindo* – a dance from Dubrovnik Littoral – is among them. A large number of questions were raised due to misunderstandings and omissions made in the act of inscription for *lindo*, and this text provides possible solutions with the intention of informing the bearers, cultural clubs and Dubrovnik public about the process of registration, and responsibility of the experts and administration.

## Introduction

As an ethnochoreologist or researcher of dance, I speak of dance as part of traditional culture, often referred to more recently as intangible culture. It has become publicly visible under this concept thanks to inscriptions on UNESCO's lists of cultural heritage.<sup>1</sup>

Immediately prior to the first international interdisciplinary scholarly conference of *Croatian Folkloric and Ethnographic Heritage in the Light of the Dubrovnik, World and Tourist Present* – the FEB, which was organised in Dubrovnik by the Folklore Ensemble *Lindó* in November 2011, it was publicly announced that the Ministry of Culture had inscribed the *lindó* – *kolo* dance of the Dubrovnik Littoral, in the Register of Cultural Properties of the Republic of Croatia. Very soon after, the standard-bearers of this tradition, inhabitants of the *Primorje*, submitted their objections and complaints to the Ministry. Their dissatisfaction came from oversights contained in the text of the decision. It was shown that unintentional oversights in the issued decision had caused reasonable objections and reactions. These responses had the potential to cause undesirable consequences to the mutual relation between the standard-bearers in the different local communities. At worst, ill-considered mediation on the part of the profession or the administration could have occurred.<sup>2</sup>

Here I shall mention not only the basic concepts and issues that relate to the UNESCO *Convention* and its development, but also the applied work of scholars, ethnologists, cultural anthropologists, folklorists, philologists, ethnomusicologists, ethnochoreologists, museologists, and conservationists – in fact, all those who contribute to the greater visibility of intangible culture. At the same time, these concepts and

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<sup>1</sup> A broader professional discussion in the English and Croatian languages on the terminology of intangible culture as heritage in the Croatian context and the criteria for inscription in UNESCO's lists was published in the journal *Etnološka tribina* (Nikočević [et al.] 2012).

<sup>2</sup> In order to better inform performers of the Littoral – *primorski lindó* as well as all parties from the county area about the process of registration in the Register of Cultural Properties and, further, on the UNESCO lists, I asked the conference organisers to ensure that we had additional time for workshops outside the agenda of the conference, and time for discussions and answering of all questions and matters of interest, not only concerning the *lindó* but also other cultural properties worthy of registration – such as the *kolende* carol songs, Konavle embroidery, sericulture, public occasion toast-makers, *lijeričari*, players of the three-stringed music instrument, comedies in the *Dubrovnik idiom*, and the like. Possibilities of cultural property registration, elements of intangible culture from the entire county that could be proposed and further documented, described and featured in local and national, but also in international frameworks were discussed at the workshop.

processes also concern the cultural policy of the Ministry of Culture, contributing to the popularisation of traditional culture. This is a matter of recognising the potential of tradition as a cultural product that is interesting and significant not only to its standard-bearers but also to the broad circle of devotees that are interested in national values. It is also tourists who are enriched by such offerings and depart from destinations satisfied with the interesting and diverse cultural experiences, and with the desire to return more frequently.

## **Croatia and UNESCO's Convention**

In 2005, Croatia was the seventeenth country to support and sign UNESCO's *Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Earlier attempts had been made at nominations on the former list of *masterpieces* of oral and intangible world heritage. UNESCO's first proclamation of masterpieces took place in 2001. For the second proclamation in 2003, Croatia nominated the *Istrian Music Microcosmos* (Nikočević 2004). The third and last proclamation of masterpieces was in 2005, when Croatia nominated *Lace-Making Art* (Eckhel 2005). None of the nominations were successful in meeting UNESCO's criteria at that time.

These three UNESCO proclamations of masterpieces were only a preparation for the *Convention* (Aikawa-Faure 2009). Experts engaged in its implementation subsequently assessed that it had been inappropriate to give prominence to intangible culture such as masterpieces since each culture is of equal value and irreplaceable to its standard-bearers, who promote it as a symbol of cultural identity and have no need to evaluate it against the ideal of tangible and monumental heritage. The initial, not very successful, Croatian experiences with nominations for the masterpiece lists, nonetheless, provided worthwhile preparation for the numerous nominations submitted at the moment in which the *Convention* came into force.

In the first cycle of nominations in 2009, Croatia managed to have seven cultural assets inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity: 1) lace making in Croatia (Lepoglava, and the islands of Hvar and Pag); 2) two-part singing and playing in the Istrian scale; 3) the festival of St Blaise, the patron of Dubrovnik; 4) the spring procession of Ljelje-kraljice/*queens* from Gorjani; 5) the annual carnival bell-ringers' pageant from the Kastav area; 6) the procession *Za Križen* ('following the Cross') on the island of Hvar; 7) and the traditional manufacturing of children's wooden toys in Hrvatsko Zagorje. Since then, a total of 13 elements have been entered

onto the UNESCO lists.<sup>3</sup> Three items were inscribed in 2010 (with two on the Representative List): 1) *Sinjska Alka*, a knights' tournament in Sinj, 2) the gingerbread craft from Northern Croatia, whose masters are more popularly known as *licitari* and 3) the *ožkanje* singing with its series of sub-types of guttural singing with shaking of the voice that is known throughout all of Croatia and beyond on the Urgent Safeguarding List. Due to the high number of Croatian inscriptions in the first two years of the *Convention*, UNESCO made it possible for Croatia to inscribe two elements on the 2011 Representative List: 1) the *nijemo kolo* – silent circle dance of Dalmatian hinterland – and 2) the *bećarac* singing and playing of Eastern Croatia. In the following year, 2012, because of the impossibility of the technical and professional assessment of more than sixty nominations within the framework of the *Convention*, UNESCO imposed the restriction of one inscription per year for each state party. The Croatian nomination was assessed positively and *klapa multipart singing* of Dalmatia, Southern Croatia, was entered on the list.

In this same year, Croatia's four-year membership mandate in the *Convention's* board expired (2008–2012), which gave Croatia's representatives an opportunity to become more closely acquainted with the various roles, to be included in monitoring the procedures, and hence to participate at a high standard. However, further implementation of the *Convention*, with its augmentations and stricter criteria will also be followed closely with the objective of perseverance with the diverse possibilities of nomination and international recognition of Croatia's intangible culture.

## **The *Lindo* – *kolo* dance of the Dubrovnik Littoral**

At the national level, intangible heritage is inscribed in the Register of Cultural Properties that has been established in keeping to the Act on Safeguarding of Cultural Properties of 1999. To date, more than one hundred intangible property items have been inscribed in the Register. They include the *lindo* – *kolo* dance of the Dubrovnik Littoral – Dubrovačko primorje.

From the first ideas on giving prominence to the specificities of Croatian national dance culture, it was clear that *lindo* was a unique traditional dance deserving registration on a national level. Since I had never researched that particular dance in detail in my fieldwork, I did

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<sup>3</sup> The web pages of the Ministry of Culture provide access to links with UNESCO's regulations and the published texts of the nominations in the English language; accessed March 2013:  
<http://www.min-kulture.hr/default.aspx?id=5220>.

not consider myself to be sufficiently competent in either undertaking the writing of the exposition supporting the nomination for inscription in the register nor issuing the decision. I have the honour of knowing one of the leading world experts on dance research, Elsie Ivancich Dunin, Prof. Emerita from the University of California in Los Angeles, born to Croatian parents. Prof. Dunin spent her entire professional life in America doing dance research, including research of the *linđo*, at first for many years among Croatian migrants in California and then in the Dubrovačko primorje (Dunin 1984, 1987, 2009). Thus I asked her to become involved. However, as a conscientious researcher, she resisted the idea for two years, being of the opinion that her role was not to become directly engaged, but rather to observe research and interpret. She did not want to exert influence on the subject of research. However, after two years had elapsed, she accepted the proposal, prompted by a complaint of the local community. An additional burden would have been writing the text in the Croatian language, so she accepted the suggestion that she write in English, leaving us to translate the text into Croatian. The Ministry and the Commission for Intangible Cultural Heritage also appreciated the advantage of having in hand the text in English for submission of international candidature. Showing the excellence that has also been her distinction in other matters, Prof. Dunin wrote the text on the Primorje *linđo*. This text was then translated into Croatian at the Ministry, with my task being to make any necessary adjustments to the Croatian text in terms of professional and technical terms.

On the basis of this broadly prepared text about the *linđo* (of 12 pages), colleagues at the Ministry of Culture had to shorten the text for the decision (to 2–3 pages). As frequently happens, quite unintentionally, an oversight occurred in abbreviation of the text so that not all the standard-bearers mentioned in Elsie Ivancich Dunin's expansive text were referred to as representatives of local communities, members of culture clubs, and members of culture and art societies. In agreement with the author of the text, I quote below the part in the Ministry of Culture's form that speaks of the current state and of changes in relation to the historical patterns and particularly to changes of their representatives:

There is intensive interest in the revival of *linđo* dancing events, organized and led by the generation of persons who experienced *linđo* in their youth (1970s). These are mainly individuals who commuted to the city and were employed in Dubrovnik-based services, but kept their homes and families in their villages rather than moving to Dubrovnik before or after the 1990s war. The exception to this pattern is the Culture and Art Society (KUD) in Slano whose many members live in Dubrovnik and commute to Slano to participate in *linđo* dancing. In Primorje there are three *linđo*

dance organizations. The oldest is a revival of a past group in Slano, the Cultural-educational Association (KPD) "Sloboda", established in 1985. This group performs for hotel guests [stylised choreography of] dances that were taught to them by members of Dubrovnik's *Lindo* Folklore Ensemble. The group was reorganized in 1996 in war-damaged Slano as KUD "Lijerica" to perform only the Primorski *lindo* in their repertoire and not the choreographed version that was introduced to them before the war. The members of the group are originally from several Primorje villages, but they did not return to war-torn homes. However, during post-war village reconstruction in Primorje's upper villages, there was support for two new dance groups organized in 1998, Culture Club (KU) "Lindo" in Ošlje-Stupa villages and KU "Žutopas" in Smokovljani-Visočani villages. They meet weekly during the off season tourist months to dance informally and learn *lindo* and other related customs. The two groups attract members from the western Primorje villages that are closer to these villages. All three groups are actively invited to perform in festivals (*smotra*) such as the annual *smotra* in Metković, and also perform in Slavonia [Northern Croatia] and Zagreb [capital]. They additionally perform for guests in Dubrovnik's hotels and restaurants, and are invited to dance *lindo* and to sing Primorske songs for weddings – usually for weddings of persons with Primorje origins. Their performances are usually with five to eight pairs, and they have realized that they must shorten the normal length of a *lindo* so as not to be boring to those who are not familiar with the village style dance.

The latest Culture and Art Society (KUD) is being established (2010) for the purposes of promoting *lindo* in a larger village of Osojnik (321 population in 2001). This is the closest Primorje village to the city of Dubrovnik, and a village that was demolished in the 1990s war. The residents of this village lost everything, and only with the outside assistance for reconstruction have they been able to return with families to continue their lives in the village. At a New Year's party (2010) in Osojnik a few elders danced *lindo* spontaneously. Three teenage girls seeing the dancing, told their mother, who is of the lost generation and does not know *lindo*, they wanted to learn how to dance, and they asked where they could do so. The mother with one of the older *lijerica* musicians posted a sign to gather anyone who wanted to learn *lindo*. They expected only about ten people to sign up, but over a hundred and twenty(!) signed and came to the first meeting. Since February of this [2010] year, over a hundred *Sočani* [people of Osojnik] gather each Saturday to dance *lindo* for most of the night. They are learning from the 1970s generation through demonstration and partnering with the younger inexperienced dancers. It is not a formal teaching, but instead the maintaining of the improvised commands of the dance order. There is no building large enough in the village to hold all those interested. Three groups were organized to take turns (children, teen years, and adults). Ages range from five to seventy-five. There are five older *lijeričari* and three

young *lijeričari* who share playing in the practice sessions. Over a third of the total village population gathers each week to socialize and dance only *linđo*.

The latest development for the continuation of *linđo* is within a newly organized group, the KU "Dubrovački Primorski Svatovi", established in June 2010. This group is centered in the upper villages of Primorje area, in Mrčevo village (107 population, 2001). The intent of this organization is to reconstruct customs, such as the wedding traditions that include *linđo*. Each of the four other *linđo* groups are members of this KU, which also has the support of the Dubrovnik Turistička Zajednica [Tourist Board] which sponsors Primorje events in Dubrovnik and in the villages related to Agrotourism (Dunin 2010).

At the moment of drawing up the exposition, nothing was known of the activities of the Ponikve Culture and Art Society [KUD] from Ponikve on the Pelješac Peninsula. This area has been undergoing a process of intensive revitalisation since 2010 with young people practising their particular *ponikovska poskočica* dance – also with a caller or *kolovođa*.<sup>4</sup>

Since not all mentioned standard-bearers had been cited in the Ministry of Culture's Decision, it was not at all surprising that those who had been omitted entered a complaint against the decision. However, they also raised objections against the association that was mentioned as the proposer, as if that oversight in the decision had been their fault, prompted by local, particular interests – which had not at all occurred nor been the cause underlying the omission.

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<sup>4</sup> Notations exist that the society was active earlier (Jerinić 1999), thus documentation should definitely be augmented by further research and exact data. Namely, the society says on its Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/KudPonikvePonikovskaPoskocica/info>) that it was founded in 2012, although on its webpage performances during the summer of 2011 are mentioned (<http://kudponikve.wix.com/ponikovska-poskocica#!nastupi/cnyl>).





*Lindo*, Žutopas Culture Club, Smokovljani – Visočani, photo: Zebec 2003.

In addition, the most problematic part of the written decision was shown to be the lack of familiarity with local concepts and terminology related to dance tradition. What bothered them most was that the *lindo* was referred to as a *dance*. To the performers, the standard-bearers, the *lindo* had never been a *dance* but was a *kolo*, possibly a *poskočica* (which is the term used on the Primorje as an older name for that *kolo*). The term *poskočica* is also entrenched in the broad area of Konavle, Župa, and the Primorje, and even further away on the island of Mljet.<sup>5</sup>

However, the differences are not only in the name but also in the performance of the steps, figures and the personage of the caller, or *kolovođa* [literally, the leader of the *kolo*], i.e., the person who guides and leads the *kolo*. In this aspect, the Primorski *lindo* differs from the

<sup>5</sup> Similar terminology issues can also be found on the island of Krk where I have done field research on several occasions. Yet these words are also encountered elsewhere, where all forms of more modern dance forms – from disco dancing onwards – are considered as *dance*. However the traditional dance is called by its local name or is simply known as the *kolo* or the *tanac*; depending on the type, genre and area.

Župa *linđo*. In the latter there is no caller in the performance, and the changes in figures are determined by the *lijerica* musician based on changes he makes in the melody and the rhythm. Over the last few decades, differentiation between those performances and their names has become customary. For example, the people of Župa perform the *linđo* without a caller; those from the Primorje a *linđo* with a caller; and those from Konavle perform the *poskočica* to the long decades-old tradition of a tamburitza group accompaniment.

Within the framework of their *folklore shows* for tourists, the Čilipi Culture and Art Society in their performances following mass on Sunday mornings, have performed their Konavle *poskočica* in the same Konavle costumes in which they also perform the Primorski *linđo*. The casual observer will not realise that the performance is not actually the native-place tradition of Konavle, but rather of the Primorje presented in a choreographed, set, and authored form in which the figures are not improvised but are performed in the same rehearsed order. This is similar to the *Linđo* Folklore Ensemble's performances in the City of Dubrovnik or the Lado Ensemble's in Zagreb as well as similar to a host of other city ensembles in Croatia that perform some of the authored choreographies of the *linđo*.

It is interesting to note the concept of the *kolovođa*: Within the *linđo* the *kolovođa* leads the *kolo* by calling out the verses that instruct the dancing couples of which figures to perform as they dance. In the amateur circle of the city ensembles, it is customary to say that the caller *commands* the *kolo*, or calls out the *commands*. However, Primorje performers have reacted to that term, stressing that these are not *commands* (which have a military obedience association), but rather *leading words* for the *kolo*.

All this shows the subtle differences that are particularly important to the performers, i.e., the standard-bearers of the tradition, since they outline the entrenched philosophy of all the members of the entire community, their relationship, and respect for tradition. These nuances remained insufficiently noted by external observers in the registration process. To that extent, the registration process shows a typical example of how it is impossible from the very beginning to carry out registration thoroughly without active engagement of the participants. We can be familiar with the professional terms, but in the case of the Primorsko *kolo* – the *linđo* – it is in the more profound knowledge of the local variants, small differences, and finesses that the basic meaning of their existence and significance is concealed or found.

The objective of this text is to draw attention to the issues that easily emerge when oversights in writing decisions occur (in this particular case, quite unintentionally). It is to be hoped that the standard-bearers will be satisfied with the corrections made with respect to all the objections in the submitted complaint. That would complete the

registration process, but definitely not the process of documentation, popularisation and further transfer of the tradition to young people. That is where the sense of registration lies: in that very continuance and transfer of knowledge and the meaning of the *lindó* to the young. Giving prominence to the *lindó* should prompt young people, like the *Sočani* of Osojnik, to show more interest in learning the *lindó*, and provide them with motivation to prepare and take part in performances that are a part of this cultural and national identity.

During the workshop held after the conference in Dubrovnik in 2011, we learned that the *Marko Marojica* KUD from Župa had recently engaged the former long-term artistic leader of the *Lindó* Folklore Ensemble from Dubrovnik to also prepare for them an authorial stylised choreography of the Primorski *lindó*, similar to the one that the ensemble from Čilipi in Konavle performs, based on the *Lindó* Folklore Ensemble's variant. The Župa performing group had, at the same time, also bought the original Primorje costumes from the choreographer, so a turbulent discussion arose on whose performance was *the most authentic* thanks to the appropriate costume.

Thanks to decades of on-stage presentation at this level, together with local recognisability throughout the Primorje, the Primorski *lindó* has also managed to impose itself as a strong *brand*. This prominence is not only within the City of Dubrovnik and the Folklore Ensemble that proudly bears its name, but also of Župa and Konavle, the Dubrovnik surroundings in which, along with their local *poskočica* or *kolo* without a caller, they also perform the Primorski *lindó* with a caller.

Within the context of the significance and implementation of the UNESCO *Convention* and the registration of the Primorski *lindó* in the national Register of Cultural Properties, the old question remains: What is the difference between the spontaneous, traditional dancing – *igranje* or *balanje* of the *kolo* and the authored standardised and rehearsed version? The latter has all couples in the *kolo* perform uniformly while the former involves customary improvisations of the performers. Another question also arises as to whether, in a similar way, the Župa *lindó* without a caller and the Konavle *poskočica*, as permanent values of the Župa and Konavle dance traditions, retain their place as equally valid local variants of the *kolo*? The Primorski *lindó* has managed to achieve a noted and prominent place along with local, regional and national recognition. Even without inscription in the register, this place has belonged to the Primorski *lindó*. Discussions during the workshops and subsequent thinking prompt the need for further research, collection of documentation and more profound recognition, not only of the Primorski *lindó* but also of the Župa *lindó* and the Konavle *poskočica* as well as other traditional dances of the Dubrovnik environs. These should represent the local and regional dance traditions equally and emphasise the diversity and creative richness of the people.

The Croatian Commission for Intangible Cultural Heritage of the Ministry of Culture will continue to promote the public recognition of intangible cultural properties. Associates of the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in their three-year project (2012–2014), funded by the Croatian Science Foundation, *Croatian Intangible Cultural Heritage, Social Identities and Values* (09/59), are holding workshops, encouraging all interested stake-holders in promotion and greater visibility, and, at the same time, prompting critical assessment of the situation subsequent to inscription in the register. They are observing the reactions of the local communities and are identifying potentially critical points in which activities on the part of scholars can help the local communities in cooperation with local and state administrative bodies. This is to be done in order to achieve results in keeping with their ideas and endeavours without threatening the cultural properties themselves and the mutual relations at the local level. In other words, any process of administration and forcing of elusive, particularly intangible, properties that are at the focus of the philosophy, faith and complexity of human relations into the small sections of the nomination form can invoke similar or even worse reactions of those interested, and it is for that reason that we have to act with forethought to save both energy and nerves, and to orient matters in a positive and worthwhile direction.

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