



Heritage, Tradition, Identity. A Case Study of the Palio di Siena
SIEF International Summer School
Siena, 25 June–3 July 2020

In collaboration with the Department of Scienze Storiche e dei Beni Culturali, University of Siena and the Scuola di Specializzazione in Beni Demoetnoantropologici, University of Perugia

The third SIEF International Summer School aims to explore the triangle composed of *tradition*, explored as an open and progressively constructed concept, *identity*, as a grassroots need or rhetorical construct, self-legitimizing and aiming to enact difference, and *heritage policies*, with their contrasting demands of safeguarding and valorization of diversity versus control of the “product”. It will focus on heritage policies as strategies for the promotion of traditions in relation to the dynamics of identity and to the challenge posed by the touristic gaze.

We will be interrogating a number of questions,

- How do heritage policies, within UNESCO’S ICH framework, interact with local traditions and identities?
- How do formal bureaucratic procedures interact with cultural practices and social expectation?
- How might globalized attention on local expressive festive traditions become a process of “re-ethnicization”?
- How does this entangle with touristic valorization and re-semanticizing?
- How should we identify the role of identity in a given tradition?
- What ethical issues are raised by and within a traditional ethos?
- How may involvement in heritage bring value, while respecting the intimacy and internal ethos of a given traditional system?
- How should we read the influence of heritage or touristic valorization on a given traditional behavior and how do we avoid essentialist or late-romantic traps?
- Where does the “bliss point” lie between originality (how a traditional event occurs) and standardization (how it can be shaped to fit the matrices of heritage practice)?
- Can heritage be a resource for strengthening local traditions?

The Summer School will take place in Siena during the crucial week of the world-renowned Palio, which the participants will be invited to consider as representative of our theme.

The Palio festival focuses on a horse race and on competition among the Contrade (city districts), social networks offering mutual support and building community identity. Firmly established in Siena’s social and economic life, the Palio and the Contrade have survived many pressures throughout their existence, long before modernity discovered and celebrated them as a tourist resource, or movie and media backdrops. The Palio today may be seen as a “global” event, one that deeply involves several thousand people under an international gaze, illuminated in a continuous spotlight. The festival has been thoroughly documented and studied, both its historical roots and its more recent presence in social media and on the web (a detailed bibliography will be available to participants).

The Palio and the Contrade system offer a rich lens through which Summer School participants can consider our theoretical topics, not least the allure and limits of official or institutional heritage policies, media-driven over-exposure of tradition, and identity-driven cultural intimacies.

Programme

Lectures will be given by an international team of scholars of heritage processes (Dorothy Noyes, Valdimar Tr. Hafstein, Laurent-Sebastien Fournier, Alessandra Broccolini, Berardino Palumbo, Gianni Pizza, Daniele Parbuono, and Tobias Boos, among others), who will also lead workshops drawing on the shared experiences of Summer School participants. The week will also include an experience-based reflection on methodological approaches to a collaborative, comprehensive, and critical anthropology of heritage processes and institutions. The teaching team will include distinguished experts on the Palio, on Siena's history, and on cultural management and tourism economies.

Students will be invited to undertake individual or group ethnographic fieldwork, under the guidance of an expert team. Fieldwork sessions will bring participants into contact with grassroots community resilience around tradition and the very form of the festival. Meetings with one or more of the seventeen autonomous Contrade (and their collective democratic representative organizations) will be arranged, so as to explore efforts to support the tradition's transmission and to protect its image and symbols.

Lectures and seminars will be held at the Università di Siena, workshops while encounters with Contrade administrators and Palio authorities will be held on site.

PhD students from Folklore, Anthropology, Heritage Studies, Cultural Studies, and Tourism will have priority access, though Master's students at an advanced level, or fledgling post-doc applications, may also be considered, until the maximum of 20 participants is reached.

- The Summer School will award 5 ECTS credits
- There will be a registration fee of €50 (not due until the formal application through University portal later in the year). This will give participants access to University libraries and a reduced price at their restaurants.
- Support for finding accommodation, aiming for a closer integration with the town and its people will be offered, and prices will be kept as low as possible, but we are *unable to cover meal, accommodation, and travel expenses; applicants are encouraged to inquire at their own university and seek to raise funds elsewhere.*

Declarations of Interest

Please declare your interest by sending,

- 1. A short CV, clearly stating your PhD study status and your Master's degree field; and**
- 2. An abstract of 300–500 words describing your own research project and how it relates to the themes outlined above.**

Please send your declarations by 31 October 2019 to Siena2020@siefhome.org (only emailed applications will be considered).

Successful applicants will be notified by e-mail no later than 8 December 2019 and will be invited to formalize the application according to the University of Siena's procedure. A formal confirmation of acceptance is expected by the end of December 2019, so to give time enough for individual fund raising and accommodation decisions.

Any enquiry is welcome at Siena2020@siefhome.org

Fabio Mugnaini, SIEF Summer School 2020 Convener